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Page Toynbee.

October. 1900.

Toynbee 1946

DANTE'S
DIVINE COMEDY.

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THE PARADISE.

“Lassù fia caro il rivederci, amico —  
Tosto si vieta qui.” Se ciò scrivesti  
Pur nell’altrui parole, e mi facesti  
Legger, chinando quel volto pudico,  
(Che tal non arricchi, tal fa mendico,)  
Se mai così pietosa mi parvesti,  
Or quegli studj non ti sian molesti,  
Ond’io rimembro il mio piacer antico.  
Quinci da bella Speme fien lattati  
I pensier miei, mercè la gran virtute  
De’ primi affetti, e quasi concreat!,  
Che c’addolciavan la mutua salute  
Ne’ giorni, d’ogn’ambascia allontanati,  
Della puerizia, e della gioventute.

# DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY.

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## THE PARADISE:

TRANSLATED IN THE ORIGINAL TERNARY RHYME

BY

C. B. CAYLEY, B.A.

"Fecisti nos ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec  
in Te requiescat." — *Conf. S. AUGUSTINI.*

"Jura Monarchiæ cecini." — *DANTIS Epitaphium.*

"Let us not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments." — *SHAKESPEARE'S Sonnets.*

LONDON:  
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.  
1854.



LONDON:  
**A. and G. A. SPOTTISWOODE,**  
New-street-Square.

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# DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY.

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## THE PARADISE.

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### CANTO I.

THE Glory of the Mover of all Being  
Pervades the Universe, one region more,  
Another less, the effulgence of it seeing ;  
The heaven, that holds His light in fullest store,  
I entered, and saw things, which never he,        5  
Who thence returns, had power to speak, or lore,  
Because our intellect puts out to sea  
So far, when her Desire she draweth nigh,  
That memory her attendant cannot be.

But all that from the sacred realm in my 10  
Remembrance I could store, in every guise,  
Shall now the matter of my song supply.  
O good Apollo, for this last emprise  
Render me such a vessel of thy might,  
As to the longed-for laurel may suffice. 15  
Till now hath sped me one Parnassian height,  
But on my last arena now beneath  
The double safeguard, I must needs alight.  
Do thou into my bosom come, and breathe,  
As when thou drewest Marsyas of old 20  
Out of his body's perishable sheath.  
Puissance divine, if I on thee take hold,  
Till but the copy, still imprest on me  
From yon divinest kingdom, I unfold,  
Look, I shall come to thy beloved tree, 25  
And crown me with its leaf, whereunto thou  
And what I write of shall my vouchers be.  
So rarely, Father, is it gathered now,  
By Kesar or by bard, for triumphing,  
The fault and shame of human wills, I trow,) 30

That this Peneian leaf, if it can bring

Some man to thirst for it, may fairly breed  
New joyance for the joyous Delphian king.  
Great fire may after little spark succeed ;

Belike with louder voices those behind  
May pray, till Kyrrha shall respond indeed.  
By many an outlet riseth on mankind

The Lantern of the World, but from the side  
Which doth four Circles in three Crosses bind,  
With better light, with better stars allied,

He sallies, and the mundane wax more near  
His bent, is printed thence, and qualified.  
Now sent he morning there, and evening here,

From such a quarter, making white welnigh  
All this, and swart the following hemisphere ;  
When, turning to my left, did I descry

Beatris gazing towards the sun remain,  
Where eagle never so enfixed his eye.  
And as the second ray is wont again

To sally from the first, and up to rise,  
Like pilgrim, who returneth home full fain,

35

40

45

50

So from her act, infused across mine eyes  
    Into my phantasy, mine own became,  
And toward the sun I looked, beyond our guise.  
Much is permitted there, which none must aim      55  
    Here to achieve, in virtue of the place,  
Which God did for mankind's own dwelling frame.  
Nor long I bore it, nor so short a space,  
    But that, like iron from the furnace brought,  
From all its disk I saw it sparks to chase.      60  
All on a sudden day to day methought  
    Seemed added, like as though the Omnipotent  
To grace the world another sun had wrought.  
Beatris rested with her eyes intent  
    Upon those orbs eterne, and I my view      65  
Took from above, and toward her aspect bent.  
Within my nature from her glance I grew,  
    As Glaucus, after he that herb had ta'en,  
Which made him one among the Sea-Gods' crew.  
Transhumanizing cannot be made plain      70  
    *Per Verba*, but suffice the simile  
To those who shall by grace experience gain.

If I was only, as thou mad'st me be,  
 Transformed, O Love, which heaven's whirl createst,  
 Thou know'st, who by thy light upliftedst me,      75  
 When the revolvement, thou perpetuatest,  
 Desired One, attentive made me through  
 The harmony, thou blend'st and alternatest.  
 Then heaven was so enkindled in my view  
 By the sun's fire, that lake by confluence      80  
 Of rain or stream so full yet never grew.  
 The newness of the sound, and light intense,  
 Such strong desire enkindled in my breast,  
 That I thereof had ne'er a keener sense.  
 And she, to whom my soul was manifest      85  
 As to myself, its turmoil to allay,  
 Had oped her mouth ere yet by me addrest.  
 "Thou makest thyself dull," she 'gan to say,  
 "By thy own false conceit whence thou believest  
 Less than thou wouldest, if this were ta'en away.      90  
 Thou art no more on Earth as thou conceivest,  
 But lightning never from its home went out,  
 So swift as thou, who thy return achievest."

Now, though divested of my former doubt  
By the brief wordies that she smiled, far more 95  
Was I by one, that followed, wrapt about.  
I answered, "I was satisfied before  
After great marvel, but now marvel I,  
Beyond such bodies light how I can soar."  
She, having uttered then a tender sigh, 100  
With such a look as toward a raving son  
A mother turneth, on me turned her eye;  
And "All things in Creation," she begun,  
"Have in themselves Degree, which makes the Form  
That sets with God the World in Unison. 105  
High Creatures herein see the footprints worn  
Tow'rd that Eternal Worth, which is the end  
Whereto directed is the aforesaid norm.  
Now in this order, which I speak of, tend  
All beings unto their first cause, more near 110  
Or less, as each his diverse fate shall send.  
By this means unto diverse ports they steer  
Through the great Sea of Being, having all  
Dividual instincts, guiding their career.

This toward the moon is wont the fire to call,      115  
 That rules the motions of the mortal heart,  
 This knits and binds in one the terrene ball.  
 Nor only Creatures born beyond the Chart  
 Of Understanding, from this bow are chased,  
 But who in Love and Reason have a part.      120  
 That Providence, by whom this plan was traced,  
 Keeps with his light that heaven still at peace,  
 In which revolveth that, which hath more haste.  
 And now, as toward our place decreed, to this  
 End are we sped, by virtue of the bow,      125  
 Which aimeth all it shoots at bourne of bliss.  
 Full true it is, that as the shape may go  
 Awry from that which was designed by art,  
 Because the matter to respond is slow,  
 So from this course the Creature may depart      130  
 At times, for power to his free will is given,  
 To bend, thus launchèd, toward some other part.  
 And so we see the flame to shoot from heaven,  
 Whene'er the first impulsions to it lent  
 Divert it, by false pleasure earthwards driven.      135

Thou shouldst not wonder more at our ascent,

If well I judge, than men a stream admire,

Down to the plain from lofty mountain sent.

This were indeed a marvel, to require

That, freed from obstacle, thou shouldst remain,

Like matter moveless in the living fire." 141

Herewith she fixed her face on heaven again.

## CANTO II.

O you, that have pursued in tiny boats,  
Desirous but of hearkening, in the train  
Of this my ship, that singeth as she floats ;  
Turn back, and seek out your own coast again—

Trust not yourselves upon the deep, or you  
Losing my track, bewildered might remain.

No keel has ploughed the path that I pursue,  
Minerva blows, Apollo pilots me,

And Muses nine set Arctos in my view.

Ye other few, that while the time was free,       10  
Your necks have toward that bread of angels bent,  
Which feeds man here, though filled he cannot be,  
Well may you trust on this grand element

Your vessels, keeping by my furrow fast,  
Before the waters have across it blent.       15

Those wights renownèd, who to Colchos past,  
Did never glory, as shall you, not even  
When they saw Jason hold the plough at last.  
Our thirst perpetual, and at birth-hour given,  
After the Deiformal realm, welnigh 20  
As fast impelled us, as you see yon heaven.  
I looked on Beatris, and she on high ;  
And haply in the time a shaft may rest,  
And from the bowstring loose itself, and fly,  
I stood, where by a wondrous sight imprest, 25  
Mine eyes were drawn away, and thereat she  
To whom my act must needs be manifest,  
Turning, as blithe as beautiful, toward me,  
Said " Gratefully direct to God thy mind,  
For blent with his first planet now are we." 30  
Methought, that in a cloud we were confined,  
Compact and solid, burnishèd and bright,  
Like adamant, when by the sun beshined.  
This everlasting pearl received us quite  
In through itself, as water doth receive 35  
A gliding and unbroken beam of light.

Was I a body? and here may none conceive,  
 That two extensions into one may press,  
**A**s, if mass enter mass, we must believe;  
 Then should we burn with greater eagerness,      40  
     To see the substance, wherein doth appear,  
 How could with God's our Nature coalesce.  
 There shall be seen, what Faith accepteth here,  
     Not demonstrated, nay but like the first  
 Truth we believe, which of itself is clear.      45  
 "Dear Lady," I began, "as deeply pierced  
     As can be, with Devotion, thank I Him,  
 Who from me hath the mortal coil disperst.  
 But tell me now, what are those figures dim  
     Upon this body, which on earth below      50  
 Make some to fable, Cain appears therein?"  
 Then smiling, "And if man's opinion go  
     Astray," she answered, "often, wheresoever  
 The key of sense unlocketh not, I trow  
 The darts of wonder now should prick thee never, 55  
     For as thou wilt perceive, beyond the sense  
 Your reason flies with feebled-winged endeavour.

But what opinion drawest thou from hence?"

I said, "The noted variegation here  
Is caused, I think, by bodies rare and dense." 60

And she, "Thy judgement surely shall appear  
With error much beset, if to the train  
Of reasons I oppose thou lendest ear.

The orb, that seven includeth, shows you plain  
Lights many, which in magnitude and kind 65  
A different semblance notably maintain.

If rare and dense were all the Cause assigned,  
One only virtue would be less and more  
And equally with all and each combined.

Now different virtues must be gone-before 70  
By formal principles, and these would be,  
Excepting one, by thy account no more.

And farther, if the brown, discust by thee,  
Were caused by rareness, either must we deem  
This planet throughout in the like degree 75  
Of matter sterile, or as gross and lean  
Make up the members, sundry pages so  
Must in this lunar volume intervene.

Suppose the former true ; this might ye know

In the sun's occultation, where the light, 80

As through some other medium rare, would show.

This doth it not, and therefore must we cite

The next surmise to court, which if I do

Prove false, thy judgement is confuted quite.

If then the rareness pass not wholly through, 85

There needs must be at length some limit, where

Its opposite shall bar the way thereto :

The extrinsic ray must be reflected there,

As mirror, that with secret lead is lined,

Reflects all colors, which its objects bear. 90

Now wilt thou say, the ray appears begrimed

At such a place, above each other part,

From being there reflected more behind.

Experiment shall this objection thwart,

If thou shalt any time consult her, who 95

Is feeder of the fountains of your art.

Thou shalt three mirrors take, and from thee two

Remove by equal lengths, and let the last,

Far back between the others, front thy view

Turning to which, let thou a lantern, fast 100  
Behind thee kindled, make all three to gleam,  
And to thyself return from all three cast.  
**A**ll-be the farther image will not seem  
Of equal magnitude, yet on thy gaze  
It shall no doubt an equal brightness beam. 105  
Now, as the onlook of the warmer rays  
From surfaces of underlying snow  
Their former cold and color disarrays—  
Thy intellect, conditioned even so,  
I will with such a living light impregn, 110  
As on thy nerve shall tremulously glow.  
Amidst the heaven of the divine Serene  
Revolves an element, whereof the might  
Controls the substance of all things therein.  
The neighboring heaven, so populous with light, 115  
This essence deals to natures multiplied,  
From it distinct, and having in't their site.  
The sequent orbs, by modes diversified,  
Amongst their operations and their seeds,  
The several virtues, they partake, divide. 120

Each several organ of the world proceeds,  
As thou beholdest, thus from grade to grade,  
That from above it shares, below it breeds.  
Observe now well, the way that I invade  
Across this ford the truth of thy desires, 125  
That after thou may'st learn alone to wade.  
The powers and motions of the sacred gyres  
Must breathe of their blest Maker, as the care  
O' th' smith the hammer's workmanship inspires.  
And yonder heaven, which many lights make fair, 130  
From the deep mind, that its revolving sways,  
Its stamp and likeness must receive and share.  
And as the soul, which in your concrete sways,  
By many members, for that end endued,  
Itself in various faculties displays, 135  
So that Intelligence its efflux good  
Among the Stars divides and multiplies,  
Itself revolving on its unitude.  
The diverse virtue diversely allies  
Itself to that rich form, in which it glows, 140  
Where, like the life in you, itself it ties.

Out of the blissful nature, whence it flows,

The mingled virtue in the form is bright,  
As gladness in the life-rich eye-beam shows.

From this proceedeth what twixt light and light 145

Is different, and not from dense and rare ;  
This doth, as formal principle, excite,  
According to its grace, the swart and fair.

## CANTO III.

THE Sun, that whilom fired with love my breast,  
Had, proving and disproving thus, the sweet  
Aspect of goodly Truth made manifest ;  
And I, to make avouch of my complete  
And sure conviction, had so raised my head        5  
As for delivery of my words was meet :  
When something new appeared, which riveted  
So fast, through wonder, on itself my view,  
That from remembrance my confession fled.        9  
As through transparent and smooth glass, or through  
Some undisturbed expanse of waters bright,  
(Yet not so deep as makes them downward blue,)  
Return the pictured objects of our sight  
So faintly, that the gleam is not more weak  
Of pearl in midst of maiden temples white,        15

So saw I many a brightness fain to speak,  
Which made me fall in quite a different error  
From that which passioned for the stream the Greek;  
For these I deemed reflections of a mirror,  
Which made me on the sight mine eyes incline, 20  
That whence they came I might perceive the nearer ;  
And farther saw I nought, and so to mine  
Own sweet conductress back I turned them, while  
She beaming kindled from her sacred eyne.  
“ Nay, marvel not,” she said, “ if I do smile 25  
To see how still thou durst not plant thy foot  
Upon the truth — from fancies puerile ;  
But back thou turnest yet, and hast no fruit ;  
Those, whom thou seest, are very spirits, here  
Exiled, for vows which deeds have failed to suit. 30  
But speak to them, and trust what thou shalt hear,  
For yon true Spirit, who makes them all content,  
Their steps allows not from himself to veer.”  
Then turned I to the shade, who chiefly bent  
On speaking with me seemed, and said, like one 35  
That welnigh with too much desire's outspent,

“ O well-created soul, which in the Sun  
 Of life eternal dost that sweet partake,  
 Which, not partook, is understood by none ;  
 Thou wilt be highly gracious, if thou make      40  
 Me with thy name acquainted, and your lot.”

Then promptly, and with beaming eyes, she spake ;

“ Our Charity, O my brother, shutteth not  
 Its gate on just desires, else would it lean  
 On Him no more, who all his Court with what      45  
 He is, would liken ; I on earth have been  
 A Sister plighted, and if thou regard  
 Me carefully, much beauty shall not screen  
 My sameness, but thou’lt recognize Piccarde,  
 Who, placed among these others here, am blest      50  
 I’ th’ sphere, which doth his orbit most retard.  
 Our loves, which are enkindled by no zest,  
 Except the Holy Spirit’s pleasaunce, here  
 Have gladness by the rank in which we rest.  
 And this our state, which does on earth appear      55  
 So grand, is given us purely for neglect  
 Of vows, to which we did not fast adhere.”

I said, "In every marvellous aspect  
Of yours does something so celestial glow,  
As changeth you from that we recollect. 60  
And therefore in remembering was I slow,  
But now thy speech affordeth such a clue  
That more vernacular thy features grow.  
But tell me, ye that here are blest, if you  
No greater exaltation now desire, 65  
To dearer make yourselves, or more to view ?"  
She smiled not long with all her blissful quire,  
Then answered me anon, as joyous-blest  
'As tho' she burned in Love's supremest fire.  
" Our wills, O brother mine, are set at rest 70  
By power of Charity, which makes us will,  
For nought else thirsting, only things possest.  
If we should crave to be exalted still  
More highly, then would not our wills agree  
With His, who granteth us the place we fill ; 75  
Which in these orbs impossible must be,  
If all to live in Charity are bound,  
And if its Nature thou dost rightly see.

For 'tis of that blest thing the very ground,  
That in the will of God we govern ours, 80  
Which from the twain doth one sole will compound.  
So that as we live here from bowers to bowers  
Distributed, the realm doth each one please,  
Pleasing that King, who makes his own will ours.  
In his good pleasure we have each his peace ; 85  
This is the mainsea, whereto all things bear  
That he creates, and Nature's whole increase."  
Now plain it grew to me, how everywhere  
In heaven is Paradise, though the Chiefest Weal  
His grace not equally distributes there. 90  
But like as sated by one food we feel,  
And still can relish for another find,  
And crave, while thanks we render for the meal ;  
So now I strove with look and word combined,  
That she might let me know the web, whereon 95  
She, working, left the unfinished reel behind.  
" Pure life," she said, " and passing merits throne  
In higher heaven a maid, whom others make  
Their pattern, as the stole and veil they don,

Therein till hour of death to sleep and wake 100

With one dear Lord, who every vow in gree,  
That Charity formeth to his will, doth take.  
To follow whom, did I in girlhood flee

The world, and did her hallowed garb endue,  
And promised one amongst her school to be. 105  
Men, more accustomed ill than well to do,

Rent me by force from that dear cell's repose;  
My God, he knows, what life I since went through.  
This splendour eke, who on my right hand shows

Herself to thee, and who with all the sheen, 110  
That is to this our sphere appointed, glows—  
Conceiveth of herself my tale, hath been

Like me a plighted Sister, and hath given  
By force up from her brow the sacred screen.  
But since that from the Cloister she was riven 115

Against her will, against all use and right,  
She from the heart's veil never hath been driven.  
Lo ! that of great Constantia is the light ;

It is from her the second Swabian gale  
Begot the third and last successive might." 120

So said she, then began, " Hail Mary, Hail "  
To sing, and singing vanished from her throng,  
As heavy objects under watery veil.  
Mine eyes, which so far followed her along,  
As might be, when I lost her out of view,      125  
Turned to the landmark of desire more strong,  
And set themselves on Beatris anew ;  
But she gave lightning in my onlook so,  
That baffled many moments I withdrew,  
And hence in asking I was made more slow.      130

## CANTO IV.

'TWIXT meats alike removed, alike inviting  
Two ways, free Man would die of hunger sheer,  
Before he could the one conclude on biting ;  
So too would stand a Lamb in equal fear  
Between two furious ravening Wolves, and so 5  
Would stand a hound midway betwixt two deer.  
If therefore I was mute, who to and fro  
Was pusht with doubts, to that, which must have  
been,  
My conscience neither praise nor blame doth owe.  
I held my peace, but my desire was seen 10  
So painted on my features, that less well  
Would speech have shown my supplication keen.  
Then Beatris did like as Daniel,  
Who Nabuchodonosor freed from ire,  
By which he had been made unjustly fell. 15

She said, " I plainly see, how thy desire  
 Pulls thee two ways at once, and hence thy care,  
 Stifling itself, doth outwards not suspire.  
 Thou arguest, if good will remaineth there,  
 What reason makes another's violence                          20  
 My measure of deserving to impair.  
 Another cause of doubt thou drawest hence,  
 That spirits each to his own star to fall  
 Seem here, as after Plato's inference.  
 These are the questions, in thy will which all                  25  
 Alike are poised, and therefore do I mean  
 To answer that the first which hath most gall.  
 No seraph, that in God is deepest seen,  
 Nor Samuel, nor Moses, no, nor John,  
 (Take which thou wilt,) I say, nor Mary Queen,                  30  
 Possess in any a different heaven their throne  
 From yonder spirits, whom thy sight hath lost  
 Just now, nor more, nor fewer years live on ;  
 But all make beautiful the yondermost  
 Orbit, of sweet life diversely possest,                          35  
 Through feeling, more or less, th' eternal Ghost.

That here thou saw'st them, doth not manifest  
That unto them this dwelling is assigned,  
But marks the lowest grade of Heavenly Blest.  
So must one give instruction to your mind,      40  
Because from Sense alone it apprehends  
That, which to be with Intellect combined  
It soon makes worthy ; Scripture condescends  
Thus to your faculty, when it hands and feet  
Ascribes to God, and otherwise intends.      45  
And so doth Holy Church of Michael treat,  
Gabriel, and him who made Tobias whole,  
Adapting human forms to your conceit.  
That, which Timæus reasons of the soul,  
From what thou findest here is different far,      50  
If there his meaning is presented whole.  
He says, the soul returns to its own star,  
Believing, that from such she is divided,  
When forms to bodies set by Nature are ;  
And haply was his judgment better guided      55  
Than the words look, and haply standeth so,  
That his intention must not be derided.

If on these circles he desire to throw  
The blame and honour of their influence, then,  
Belike, some truth is glanced at by his bow. 60

This principle was felt perversely, when  
The ancient world it led so far astray,  
And Jove, Mercurius, Mars, were noised by men.  
That other doubt, which doth upon thee weigh,  
Less venom hath, because from following me, 65  
Its malice could seduce thee not away.  
That like Injustice should our Justice be  
In eyes of mortals, is an argument  
Of faith, not of an heretical pravity.  
Howbeit, this truth thy powers intelligent 70  
Can fairly penetrate, and therefore I  
Will make thee, after thy desire, content.  
If only where the sufferers nought comply  
With that which forceth, Violence exist,  
This could yon Spirits no way justify ; 75  
For will, not working, doth not so desist,  
But, as to fire is natural, doth soar,  
Though Violence it a thousand times may twist.

For, whensoe'er it bendeth less or more,  
It follows Violence, and so 'twas here ; 80  
These nuns could have repassed the sacred door,  
Had but their Will been steadfast and sincere,  
As that which on the grate Laurentius held,  
And Mutius to his right hand made severe.  
Then had it, by the route they came, impelled 85  
These to return, on being once set free,  
But this unflinching Will is all too sold.  
And by these words, if gathered up they be  
With heed, the argument is overthrown,  
Which would full oft have sorely hindered thee. 90  
But now doth rise a second pass upon  
Thy view, so strait, that vainly wouldest thou try  
To scale it ; thou wouldest faint, wert thou alone.  
That never can a blessed Spirit lye,  
Since to the Truth of Truths in all time near, 95  
This I to thee did surely testify.  
And still thou couldest from Piccarda hear,  
That Constance' heart unto the veil was true,  
And so she seems to contradict me here.

Full oftentimes, O Brother, to eschew 100

Some harm, have men against their liking laid  
Their hands on what behoved them not to do.

As when Alcmeon, by his father prayed  
Thereof, his mother murdered, and to cleave  
To filial piety, was impious made. 105

At such time I would have thee to believe,  
That force and will are mixed, and sin doth hence  
Arise, which no excuses can receive.

No liking absolute to Ill consents,  
But fearing, lest it more distress may reach, 110  
By shunning some — in so far it consents.  
To liking absolute Piccarda's speech  
Refers, and I on other liking glose,

And therefore is a truth declared by each.”  
Thus welled this holy rivulet, which flows 115

From out the fountains, which all Truths discover,  
Thus gave to one and each desire repose.  
“ O Goddess, loved one of the all first Lover,”  
Said I, “ that overflow'd me by thy sound,  
And warm'st, and more and more with life dost cover,

There's in me no affection so profound,

121

As grace for grace can render, but may he,  
Who sees and power has, make thy meed abound.

There's nought can sate our Intellect, I see,

But if the Truth, which doth none others bear 125  
Without itself, shall his enlightener be.

Then down he lays himself, like beast in lair,

If it he reach, and he can reach it well ;  
For if not, idle would be all our care.

This causeth by the foot of Truth to swell

130

The sprigs of Doubt, and that is Nature too,  
Which so doth us from heights to heights impell.

This, this invites, emboldens me from you

To ask, Liege Lady mine, in lowliness,  
Another Truth which lies beyond my view.

135

I would enquire, if men may so redress

The broken vow by different mulcts allowed,  
That by your standard they may weigh not less."

Beatris lookt on me, in her eyes a crowd

Of loving splendors, O but so divine, 140  
That baffled every power within me bowed,  
And I came near to swoon with swimming eyne.

## CANTO V.

“ If unto thee I flame in fire of love,  
Beyond the measure and the wont of earth,  
And thy sight beareth not the blaze thereof,  
Be not surprised, for this thing has its birth  
From insights clear, which as they more detect, 5  
So from that good which they have learned look forth.  
Full plainly do I see thy Intellect  
Emblazed already by that light eterne,  
Which, seen but once, enkindleth Love’s effect.  
And your affections if aught else misturn, 10  
’Tis but some trace and likeness of the same,  
Ill understood, which there doth glimmering burn.  
Thou fain wouldest ask, what service man may frame,  
Whereby for vows imperfect to repay,  
And make the soul secure from every claim.” 15

Thus Beatris gave beginning to this Lay,  
And thus the sacred effluence of her word  
Continued, like one speaking without stay.  
“No gift God in creating hath conferred  
More noble, more the largeness of his grace      20  
Fitting, nor higher by himself preferred,  
Than that free-will, which he vouchsafes to place  
In each and all of his intelligent  
Creatures, and hath vouchsafed in every case.  
The vow's high value hence by argument      25  
Thou mayst derive, if it be such in fact,  
That God consenteth, whereto you consent.  
For when 'twixt God and man is closed the pact,  
There's made a sacrifice of that same treasure,  
Such and so great, and made by its own act.      30  
The Compensation how will you then measure?  
If you pretend to use the offering well,  
You make good almsdeed from unrightful seizure.  
Now mayst thou safe about the main part dwell,  
But seeing Holy Church doth here dispense,      35  
Which seems to contravene the truth I tell,

Thou must awhile at table stay, sithence  
 That rigid food, thou hast partaken, yet  
 Requires digestives. Open now thy sense  
 To that which I declare, and firmly set                  40

My words within thy mind, for never skill  
 By teaching, without memory, could commence.  
 Two parts the nature of the vow fulfil ;  
 One is the matter, out of which 'tis made,  
 And one the bounden service of the will.                  45

This last is never cancelled, but if paid,  
 And of the same it therefore is, that so  
 Precisely by my words the Law was laid.  
 To offer, therefore, did the Hebrews owe  
 Without remission, though belike the thing                  50

Could be replaced, as thou art held to know.  
 The part material of your offering  
 May well be such, that ransomed you may be,  
 If by sound rule a substitute you bring.  
 But let no mortal think, that he is free                  55

To shift the burthen off his back without  
 The turn of both the white and yellow key;

And every foolish compromise misdoubt,  
Unless the substituted value may  
Surpass, as three doth two, the work left out.      60  
Hence, whatsoever thing shall so much weigh  
By proper worth, as every scale to lift,  
Thou canst for such no compensation pay.  
In vowing let men make no idle shift ;  
Be faithful, and when faithful, not blear eyed,      65  
Like Jephtha, when he made his dearest gift ;  
For "I have erred," he sooner should have cried,  
Than keeping faith, done worse : and thus unwise  
Wilt thou find him, that over Greeks ruled wide ;  
Whence Iphigene her all-too-beauteous eyes      70  
Embathed, and sharers of her weeping made  
All who such rites heard mention, fools and wise.  
Be you, O Christians, not so lightly swayed,  
Be not by every wind like feathers bent,  
Nor pardon by all waters deem conveyed.      75  
Ye have the Old and eke New Testament,  
And have the Church's Shepherd, you to guide,  
Let that suffice you for your stablishment.

If evil avarice counsel aught beside,  
 Be men, O judge not, as the brute perceives,      80  
 Lest Jews amongst your towns should you deride.  
 Be not you mated with the lamb, that leaves  
   His milk, and takes his pleasure in career  
 Too wanton-frolic, and himself aggrieves."  
 All this said Beatris, even as you hear,      85  
 Then turned her brow, solicitous, toward the place  
 From which the world doth most enlived appear.  
 Her stillness, and the changing of her face  
   Imposed a silence on my greedy mind,  
 Which for new questions found already space ;      90  
 And as the arrow, which its mark shall find,  
   And pierce, before the string at rest hath been,  
 So with the second realm we were combined.  
 There I so full of joyance saw my Queen,  
   Upon this heaven's luminary while      95  
 She entered, that the planet grew more sheen ;  
 But if the Star was changed and made to smile,  
   O what was I, that of my nature sure  
 Am lightly changeable through every style ?

As under guarded waters, husht and pure, 100  
 The fishes cluster, if the sight on shore  
 Of aught that seemeth food, shall them allure,  
 I saw above a thousand lights, which bore  
 To us-ward, and from all was heard one speech,  
 "Behold, who come to make our lovings more." 105  
 And toward us nearer when they 'gan to reach,  
 Across her tissue, vivid and luminous,  
 The spirit, exceeding blest, appeared of each.  
 O Reader, think, if what beginneth thus  
 Were not continued, how to know the rest 110  
 Thou wouldest remain with cravings anxious,  
 And by thyself thou mayst have plainly guest,  
 How I desired to question of their state  
 These souls, as soon as they were manifest.  
 "O Child of Weal, to whom before the date 115  
 At which thy warfare ceaseth, Grace hath given  
 Eternal Triumph's Thrones to contemplate,  
 We by the Love that overstreams all heaven  
 Are filled, and therefore, if thou long to know  
 Aught from us, fill thy farthest likings even." 120

Of these kind spirits one bespoke me so,  
And Beatris also bade me "Tell, O tell,  
And trust, as though to Gods, in what they show."  
"I th' nest of thy own light I see thee dwell,  
And how thou draw'st it from thine eyes, and how  
It flashes, when thou smil'st, observe I well." 126  
But know not, who thou art, nor wherefore thou,  
O spirit of bliss, art planted in the sphere  
To see which rays extrinsic disallow."  
So spoke I, turning toward the light, which here 130  
Had me address before, whereat he grew  
Far brighter in his effulgence than before,  
And as the Sun, where he repugns our view  
With his own brightness, when the warmed sky  
Has gnawed the weldings of thick vapors through,  
So by much joy was covered from mine eye 136  
With his own sheen this hallowed high semblaunt,  
And so sequestered made he soon 's reply,  
In manner as will my next Canto chaunt.

## CANTO VI.

“ WHEN Constantine had turned against the Sun  
The Eagle’s course, which followed it before  
Above the Ancient, who Lavinia won,  
This bird of God’s two hundred years and more

In the uttermost of Europe held his ground        5  
Fast by the mountains, whence he sprang of yore ;  
And there, with sacred pinions wide around  
Shadowing, he ruled the world for his domain,  
Changing from hand to hand till mine he found.

Cæsar I was, Justinian I remain ;        10

I took from Law, by all-first Love’s consent,  
(Therewith I burn,) the excessive and inane.

And ere I was upon this work intent,

I thought one nature dwelt in Christ, not two,  
And under such a faith I lived content.        15

But me the blessed Agapetus, who  
 Was then chief Pastor of the Christian fold,  
 Unto right faith by his persuasion drew.  
 To whom I cleaved, and plain as you behold  
 That contradicting terms are right and wrong,      20  
 So now appears to me the truth he told.  
 When smooth I walked with Holy Church along,  
 To my great labor Heaven was pleased of grace  
 To prompt me, and I thereto made me strong,  
 And left my Belisarius in my place      25  
 The conduct of my wars, whom Heaven so well  
 Supported, that for rest I found good space.  
 Thus much it might suffice that I should tell  
 For thy first question ; howbeit Circumstance  
 Upon this topic urges me to dwell :      30  
 That thou mayst know, what reasons countenance  
 To vex this hallowed-holy sign both those  
 Who call him theirs, and 'gainst him arms advance.  
 Behold, what glorious ancient deeds impose  
 Upon us reverence for him, from that hour      35  
 When Pallas died, on whom his rule arose !

Thou know'st, in Alba how he made his bower  
Three hundred years and more, untill the last,  
When three fought three again to build his Power.  
Thou know'st his works, as through the kings he past,  
From rape of Sabines to Lucretia's tears, 41  
When o'er the nations round his yoke he cast.  
Thou know'st, how he was borne by gallant spears  
Of Rome against the Epeirot and the Gaul,  
Against the princes but and leagues of peers. 45  
Whence Quintus, whom of locks untrimmed we call,  
The Decii, and Torquatus, had that fame  
I gladly blaze, and hence the Fabii all.  
He did the Arabians' overweenings tame,  
When down those Alpine rocks, from which thou, Po,  
Descendest, after Hannibal they came. 51  
In early age beneath him Scipio  
Triumphed, and Pompey, proving to that hill,  
Which thou wast born beneath, so dire a foe.  
Then came that hour, when Heaven was pleased to fill  
The world again with quiet like its own, 56  
And Cæsar raised this bird by Rome her will.

Then what he wrought from Rhine to Var, Saone  
Hath seen, Arar, Isère, and every glen,  
Whose tribute swells the defluence of Rhone. 60  
That which he wrought beyond Ravenna when  
He past, and oversprang the Rubicon,  
Was higher than all pitch of tongue or pen.  
To Spain he turned his battle-power anon,  
Thence on Dyrrachium and Pharsale arose, 65  
Till Nile was hot with agony ; thence upon  
Simois he looked, the mountain whence he rose,  
Antandros, and where Hector sleeps his last,  
And ill for Ptolemy shook off his repose.  
To Juba, rapid as lightning, next he past, 70  
Then turned, where you behold your sunset, where  
Pompeius yet prolonged the clarion's blast.  
Of what he made his next uplifter dare,  
Brutus with Cassius barks in hell-pit set,  
And Modona and Perugia wailed whilere. 75  
This wails the woful Cleopatra yet,  
Who, flying from his face, was of the snake  
Enforced, a livid and eager death to get.

In that same hand he made the Red Sea shake ;

Therein such peace upon the World he brought 80  
That men the shrine of Janus might forsake.

But that which by the lauded sign was wrought

Till this, and which to follow yet was sure,  
Through Earth his realm in his allegiance taught,  
Grows in appearance trifling and obscure, 85

If in third Cæsar's hand the effect you seek  
With eyebeam single and intention pure.

For living Justice, that by whom I speak,

Allowed him in the hands of whom I name,  
The glory, upon her wrongs the wrath to wreak. 90  
Attend now well, to what discourse I frame.

Next this he scoured with Titus, and repaid  
Vengeance for vengeance of the antique blame.  
Next, when the Longobardian tooth had preyed

On holy Church, below that Eagle's wing 95  
Came Charles the Great, and triumphed in her aid.  
Consider now, if wrong reproach I fling

On whom I named above, and their bad zeal,  
Which is the cause, whence your mishaps all spring. \*

One sets against the flag of Public Weal 100

The fleur-de-lis, one plays a private part  
Therewith, and most who sins 'tis hard to feel.

Let, let the Ghibellines pursue their art,

By other flags, for this one ill may bear  
He, who from justice keeps him ever apart. 105

Let Charles the Younger and his Guelfs not dare

To beat him down, nay, but those talons dread,  
That from a prouder lion have pulled hair.

Full oft the tears are by the children shed,

Whose fathers sinned, and think you, God shall leave  
His arms, and take your flower-de-luce instead? 111  
This little star is furnished to receive

Found-worthy spirits that have active been  
That fame and good report they might achieve.

And whensoe'er affections downward lean, 115

Diverging thus, it follows that the rays  
Of genuine love must upward mount less sheen.  
But even this, that each one's bliss repays

His merits duly, makes our joy to grow,  
For none too great or small his meed surveys. 120

The living Justice our affection so  
Doth by these means attemper, that our feet  
Astray to no iniquities can go.  
As diverse voices in choice music meet,  
Lo ! thus in blessed life doth throne by throne, 125  
Among these orbs make modulation sweet.  
And in the pearl, which now thou look'st upon,  
There shines a Light, (and Romeo was his name,)  
For whose great goodly deed small thanks were shown.  
But those Provençals, who are here to blame, 130  
Got little mirth ; and theirs be dole and teen,  
Who from good works of others work their shame.  
Four daughters, and of each a wedded queen  
Had Raymond Berlinghier, and this was wrought  
By Romeo, by this man obscure and mean. 135  
Then by intriguers' arts his lord was brought  
To ask a reckoning of that servant just,  
Who six with five returned where ten he sought ;  
Then old and poor, trudged out into the dust ;  
And if the world but knew, what heart he wore, 140  
In begging for his bread, crust after crust,  
They praise him now, and yet would praise him more."

## CANTO VII.

“BE hallowed, holy God of Sabaôth,\*

Who overshest in thy Light of Light  
The blissful ardors of these Malakhôth?”†  
Thus to his gyre returning, in my sight,

That Son of life eternal seemed to sing,  
Above whose head the double sheen was bright ;  
And so resumed the dance amidst his ring ;  
Then all behind the mask of distance fell,

Rapid, as a spark was ever seen to spring.  
I pondered in my doubts, and “ tell them, tell,”

My heart said in me, “ tell to lady mine,  
Who kills our thirst by words that sweetly well.”  
But that respect, whose lordly bounds confine

My will, at only hearing BE and IS,  
Made me, like one who drowses, to incline.

\* Hosts.

† Kingdoms.

Not long could I remain, for Beatris  
Beshone me with a smile, that might have made  
A man, set round with fire, to breathe in bliss.  
And, "I infallibly perceive," she said,  
    " That, how a just revenge can justly be         20  
Avenged, this question in thy thoughts is weighed.  
But I will set thy mind full quickly free,  
    And thou give ear, for knowledge of great  
        worth  
In what I speak shall be conferred on thee.  
The man, who lived without the mean of birth,         25  
    Not brooking for his weal his will to rein,  
Dooming himself, doomed all his race on earth ;  
From whose default mankind hath ailing lain,  
    Through ages, with vast error roofed above,  
Till to come down the Word of God was fain,         30  
And was in Person made partaker of  
    This Nature, from her Founder gone astray—  
By the sheer act of his perpetual love.  
Now turn thy face on that which I shall say—  
    This Nature now, in her Creator blent,         35  
As he created, good and flawless lay.

Yet still was exiled, and incompetent  
 Of Paradise, ever since beyond the course  
 Of truth, and of her native life, she went.  
 The sentence then, to which the Cross gave force, 40  
 If by th' assumèd Nature you it scan,  
 There was none ever had so just a source,  
 Nor more unrighteous, since the world began,  
 If him that suffered you regard alone,  
 By whom was borne the nature of a man. 45  
 Thus from one act are diverse issues shown ;  
 For by one death the Jews and God were pleased ;  
 Therethrough quaked Earth, and heaven was open  
 thrown.  
 Now from this difficulty art thou eased,  
 Enquiring, how by vengeance of a just 50  
 Avengement was a righteous court appeased.  
 But I discern, that now thy mind is thrust  
 From thought to thought amidst a coil, from whence  
 To loose herself she hath no little lust.  
 Thou sayst, herein I well discern thy sense, 55  
 Yet comprehend not, why in but this guise  
 God unto man's redemption would dispense.

This judgement, Brother mine, low-buried lies  
For every mind, which hath not at the flame  
Of Love matured the virtue of its eyes. 60

But I will tell thee now, since hereat aim  
Full many, and the target few discern,  
Why worthiest of its end this means became.  
Our God his goodness from herself doth spurn  
All grudge, and in herself doth sparkling blaze, 65  
And setteth forth her goodliness eterne.  
That, which from her without a medium rays,  
Is never-ending, since no younger hours  
Can blur the stamp, where she the signet lays.  
That, which from her without a medium showers, 70  
Is free, self-moving, for it cannot be  
Subjected to the later births their powers.  
'Tis like her most, and it most liketh she ;  
Because the holy heat, whence all things glow,  
In things most like it, plays most living-free. 75  
In all these points the human creature so  
Is vantaged, and if one but him forsake,  
Needs must he from his Worship fall down low.

Sin can alone disfranchise him, and make  
 Unlike the Sovran Good ; so that from all        80  
 Its rays but little whiteness he can take.  
 Nor can he once again his rank recall,  
 Unless by filling what is void by crime,  
 Drinking for guilty sweets deservèd gall.  
 It follows, that our Nature, from the time        85  
 She sinned in all her substance, hath been cast  
 From all these honors, as from Eden's clime,  
 And could recover not, from first to last,  
 (If you the question shall most finely view,)  
 Unless by one of these two fords she past ;        90  
 That God should either grant free pardon through  
 His nobleness, or man that wrought amiss  
 Should by himself the satisfaction do.  
 Now fix thy look direct within the abyss  
 Of Counsels everlasting, on my speech        95  
 Attending, far as thou canst follow this.  
 Man could not by his Nature's limits reach  
 To compensating ; how could he descend,  
 In late obedience that degree through which

He meant by his transgression to ascend ?

100

Behold the reason, why by his own deed  
Man was allowed not his estate to mend.

It was with God left therefore to proceed,

[By mercy or by justice,] by one course  
Of his, or both, for your redemption's need.

105

But since all benefits with greater force

Oblige, as better they shall manifest  
The goodness of the mind, that is their source,  
Our God his goodness, through the world imprest,

Has been contented by the twofold way  
To go to work in your redemption's quest.  
And twixt the latest night and earliest day,

The world no such procedure great and high  
On either hath surveyed, nor shall survey.  
For God more bounteous gave himself, whereby

115

Man might suffice for man's own restoration,  
Than if by grace he should them justify.  
And every plan besides for your Salvation

Had fallen short, but if God's only Son  
Himself had humbled unto Incarnation.

120

But now to comment on some words I run  
 Back somewhat, to fulfill thy whole desire,  
 That thou mayst here view plain, as I have done.  
 Thou sayst, I see the air, the water, fire  
 And earth, and all commixtures where they blend,  
 Come to corruption, when brief terms expire ;      126  
 And Creatures in all such I apprehend,  
 So these, if that which I have heard be truth,  
 Should safe be, to have no decay nor end.  
 The Angels, O my Brother, and that sooth-      130  
 Faced land, in which thou art, Creatures to be,  
 All whole as they exist, may claim forsooth.  
 But all these elements, just named by thee,  
 And all things, which of their commixture rise,  
 Informed are by created faculty.      135  
 Created is the matter, they comprise ;  
 The virtue, which informs them, is created,  
 In one or other star that round them flies.  
 The souls, with which the brute and plant are freighted,  
 The rays and movements of the holy fires      140  
 Educe from composites potentiated.

But Sovran Grace without a mean inspires  
Our Life, and her of him enamoreth, so  
That Him she everlastingely desires.  
And hereby also thou the truth mayst know      145  
    Of our own resurrection, having weighed  
The mode our flesh was wrought-in long ago,  
When our first parents, he and she, were made.

## CANTO VIII.

THE world supposed of yore, a perilous creed,  
That lovely Cypris, under heaven's third  
Orb circling, scattered passion's maddening seed ;  
Whence not to laud her power alone were heard  
The shouts of worshippers, and victims bled, 5  
In these old nations, as of old they erred,  
But Cupid's and Dione's honor spread,  
And one they called her mother, one her child,  
And he to 've sat in Dido's barm was said.  
So too from her, that heads this lay, they styled 10  
Yon planet beautiful, by whom the Sun  
Is now i' th' eyes, now in the neck besmiled.  
Our mounting, ere it was perceived, was done,  
But the star entered I could well suppose,  
When my liege lady had more beauty won. 15

And as amidst the flame the sparkle shows,  
As voice through other voice is heard aright,  
If one remains, and th' other comes and goes,  
Thus lamps I saw, that circled in this light,  
And more or less, methought, of speed upheld, 20  
To suit the eternal tenure of their sight.  
No wind was e'er from colder cloud impelled  
In blast invisible or in lightning gleam,  
Which, had you but those lights divine beheld,  
Would not then sluggish and encumbered seem, 25  
(As toward us they advanced, leaving the gyre  
Commenced among the exalted Seraphîm).  
And after those, that in the front came nigher,  
Sounded Hosannas, which afresh to hear  
I never since was left without desire. 30  
Then one among them, toward us drawing near,  
Alone began, " We 're ready all to do,  
That we may glad thee, all thou holdest dear.  
We circle with the heavenly Prinedoms through  
One orbit, and like speed, like thirst we prove ; 35  
These are they, whom on earth thou sang'st unto,

‘ Ye that, contemplating, the third heaven move ; ’

And we’re so love-rich, that for thy content  
Some while to rest shall us no less behoove.”

Then after I had reverently bent

40

My eyes upon my lady’s face, and she  
Had made them blithe and sure with her consent,  
They turned upon the light, which promised me

Such goodness, and with deep emotion brake  
My voice forth, saying, “ Tell me what are ye ? ” 45

And O, but how I saw new blitheness make

Addition to the muchness and the mode  
Of his preceding blitheness, while I spake !  
Such grown he said, “ The world for my abode

Not long was lent, though longer had it been, 50  
Much ill were spared that now is on the road.

My gladness hides me from thee, for its sheen  
Involves, and beams about me, and above,  
As creatures overcharged with fleece are seen.

Well didst thou love me, and hadst cause to love, 55  
For had I longer lived, I would have shown  
Thee somewhat more than barren leaves of love.

That shore, which on the left is bathed by Rhone,  
From where La Sorgue and he their waves confound,  
In season looked for me to fill the throne.                  60  
So did yon foreland of Italia, towned  
With Gâeta, Bari, and Crotona, there  
Where Tronto and Verde from the deep rebound.  
And of the land, that Danube waters, where  
The borders of the Germans first are past,                  65  
My brows began the glittering crown to bear.  
The fair Trinacria, darkly oft o'ercast,  
Where 'twixt Pelorus and Pachynum snarls  
The gulf, that whitens most i'th' Eural blast,  
Not from Typhoeus, but from sulphurous marls              70  
Enkindling, yet might wait her monarchs, all  
Through me from blood of Rodolph and of Charles,  
If evil rule, which cannot fail to gall  
The subject nations, had not roused in arms  
Palermo, for the French their death to call.              75  
And if my brother hence had some alarms  
Conceived, the Catalonians' grasping need  
Would fly ere this — to work him no worse harms.

For care is wanting to be given indeed  
     By him, or by some else, lest all amount         80  
 Of freight the burthen of his bark exceed.  
 His nature, which, derived from generous fount  
     Is niggard, would an army want of such  
 As nought would in their coffers care to count.”  
 “ Dear lord of mine, because my joy, so much         85  
     As by thy speaking ’tis poured out on me,  
 Where the ends and origins of all joys touch  
 Appears, as I behold it, so to thee,  
     Thence I rejoice, and sweet too this I find  
 That thou to Godward looking shouldst it see.         90  
 Thou hast rejoiced me ; now then clear my mind,  
     As thou to doubt hast moved me by thy speech,  
 How can the sweet leave bitter germs behind ?”  
 These words were mine, he answered, “ In thy reach  
     I’ll set the truth, that now behind thee lies ;         95  
 That Good, who blesseth and revolveth each  
 Orb of the kingdom, wherein thou dost rise,  
     Works out by all these vast rotundities  
 His Providence, (their virtues which applies.)

And not foreseen each nature only is 100  
In the mind, perfect of itself alone,  
But each together with his bourne of bliss.  
So therefore all, that from this bow is thrown,  
Falls predisposed for its appointed end  
As right, as arrow against the target flown. 105  
Were this not so, the heaven thou dost ascend  
Would after such wise order its effects,  
That not to works, but ruins would they tend.  
This cannot be, unless those intellects  
That move these heavens, full perfection lack, 110  
As must the First, except he them corrects.  
Shall I this argument more whitely track?"  
"Nay, for I see't impossible," said I,  
"That Nature should i'th' needed course grow slack."  
"And would men," he resumed, "be losers by 115  
Remaining Citizens no longer?" "Yea,  
And here I ask no proof," was my reply.  
"Well now, unless by various functions they  
Live on the earth distinguished, can this be?  
No, surely, if the truth your Master say." 120

Thus far with premises proceeded he,  
 And then concluded, "So the roots, that bear  
 These your results, must likewise disagree.  
 Thus, here's a Solon born, a Xerxes there,  
 And here Melchizedek, there him behold,      125  
 Who lost his son, in winging middle air.  
 The circle-working Nature, that doth mould  
 Your mortal wax, doth well her work indeed,  
 But is by no respect of place controlled.  
 Hence comes it, Esau issues from one seed      130  
 With Jacob, and the Twins of Rome partake  
 A blood so vile, that Mars his name they need.  
 The gendered Nature would her path still make  
 Like that which her begetters walked of yore,  
 Did Providence divine her rule not break.      135  
 Now that, which was behind thee, stands before,  
 But that, how dear I hold thee, thou mayst rate,  
 Put in thy mantle one deduction more.  
 Nature in all time, if she find her state  
 Incongruous, like a seed, that from its place      140  
 Hath been transplanted, needs must derogate.

And if your world down yonder would that base  
Regard, which Nature setteth down for each,  
It, following her, would much exalt its race.

But ye the life monastic wrongly teach                  145  
    To those that are but fit the sword to gird,  
And kings ye make whose talent is to preach ;  
'Tis thus that from the path your feet have erred."

## CANTO IX.

AFTER thy Charles, O queen Clementia fair,  
Had thus illumed, he told me of the cheat,  
That was i' th' future to befall his heir.  
But "whisht," he said, "and leave the years to fleet;"  
Hence more I can repeat not, save that wo 5  
Deserved shall overtake your wrongers' feet.  
And now the life within that hallowed glow  
Had on the Sun, which fills them, turned again,  
As toward the Weal, that all things feasteth so.  
Ah souls deceived, ah impious and inane, 10  
From such a weal your hearts who disunite,  
Turning your temples to appearance vain !  
And now another splendor, growing bright,  
As she approached, and brighter in her blee,  
Made manifest, she fain would me delight. 15

And Beatris her eyes, which over me  
Were guarding, by my own again besought,  
Of loved allowance gave the guarantee.  
“And O let my desire not come to nought,”  
Said I, “thou blessed Spirit, and prove it true,      20  
That I within thee can reflect my thought.”  
Thereat the lamp, which was to me still new,  
From out her depth, wherein she sang before,  
Went on as who delighteth well to do.  
“ Above the tract of lewd Italian shore,      25  
Between Rialto and the springs,” she said,  
“ That Brenta and Piâvè’s outgoings restore,  
There stands a hill, nor raises high its head,  
From which a spark, that on the country flew  
With terriblest assault, was whilom shed.      30  
From one ancestral root with him I grew;  
Cunizza was my name, and here I shine,  
As one the planet’s brightness did subdue.  
But lightly I forgive this fault of mine,  
The occasion of my lot, (which may perplex      35  
Your common sort,) nor doth it make me pine.

The loved and lustrous diamond, who decks  
This heaven upon my dearer side, great praise  
Has left on earth, and time shall yet annex  
Five hundredth years to this, ere it decays— 40  
Who now can motives for well doing lack,  
That life may from the first life's ashes blaze?  
And hereof little thinks yon modern pack  
Whose bounds Adige and Tagliamento lave,  
Nor yet for being beaten turn they back; 45  
But Padua's blood shall mottle soon the wave,  
That underneath Vicenza creeps, sithence  
Her sons are in the teeth of Duty brave.  
And nigh Cagnâo and Silë's confluence, 49  
There's one, who lords it, and his head bears high,  
For whom the weavings of the snares commence.  
And Feltro, ere a long time yet go by,  
Shall her ungodly pastor's treason wail,  
Than whom no worse in Marta's dungeons lie.  
There's Ferrarese blood, which too vast a pail 55  
Would need to hold it, and whoe'er should weigh  
The several ounces, from fatigue would fail;

Blood, which this courteous Churchman, to display  
 His partisanship, shall present, which kind  
 Of gifts shall be in the country's general way. 60

Aloft are mirrors, (Thrones the name assigned  
 By you,) which make to us God manifest  
 As Judge ; hence comely such proclaims we find." 64

She ended here, and made as though imprest  
 With some new thought, and freshly toward the ring,  
 In posture as before, herself addrest. 66

Then seemed a wondrous and a glorious thing  
 That second gladness, whom ere this I knew,  
 As when fine rubies to the sun you bring :  
 For joy up yonder giveth brightness new, 70

As laughter here, but down below the shade,  
 Saddening within itself, grows dusk in hue.  
 "O blessed spirit, all things are displayed  
 To God, and from his sight thy own sight fills ;  
 No will to thee with cloud is overlaid. 75

Then wherefore does thy voice, which heaven thrills  
 With yon God-loving fires, who make of three  
 Wings either side their mantle—wherefore stills

Thy voice not my desirings ; I would thee  
 So long not keep, awaiting my demand,       80  
 If I were in thee selved, as thou in me."

"The largest valley, wherein floods expand,"  
 (Thus after mine the spirit's words begun,)       85  
 "Save that, which draws about the world a band,  
 Between war-brooding coasts against the sun,  
 So far, as maketh its meridian line  
 Of its horizon, hath free course to run.

A country on that valley's shore was mine,  
 Twixt Ebro and Macra, where some little way  
 The Tuscans and the Genoese confine.       90

My birthplace nearly shareth with Boujaye  
 The hours of sunrise and of sunset — there  
 Hath once the blood of patriots warmed the bay.  
 Men called me Fûlk, when of my name aware ;  
 As living by this planet I have been       95  
 Charactered, so doth she mine impress bear.  
 For not more hotly burned the Carthage queen,  
 Sichæus' and Creusa's grief, than I,  
 While chartered youth was on my features seen.

Not more the Rhodopean maid, who by 100

Demophoon was ensnared, not Hercules  
Letting Iolè next his heart-strings lie,  
Nor here is this repented, but doth please ;—  
The fault I say not, which none recollect,  
But the Excellence, which orders and foresees. 105  
Here look we through the art, which things hath  
deckt

So nobly, and discern the world below,  
Turned by the upper with how bright effect.  
But that thou mayst all satisfaction know

To thy desires, the children of our sphere, 110  
Behoves it, that I should still farther go.

Thou wouldst enquire, what is the soul most near  
My own, which yonder glory doth enclose,  
Like sunbeam columned upon waters clear.

Now know, that Rahab therein hath repose 115  
Eternal, and as one amongst us made,  
With all the brightness of this heaven she  
glows.

In th' orbit, whereon terminates the shade,  
 By which around your earth the light is riven,  
 She first of souls from Christ his triumph stayed. 120  
 'Twas fit that she, in this or some one heaven,  
 Should rest, a trophy of the conquered scope,  
 For which the two uplifted palms were given,  
 Because she favored the first glorious hope  
 Of Joshua, entering on that holy land, 125  
 For whose remembrance small care has the Pope.  
 Thy City, planted by that rebel's hand,  
 Who turned his face from his Creator first,  
 Whose envy such a world of harm has planned,  
 Brings forth and spreads the floren flower accursed, 130  
 That makes the shepherd for the wolves a mate,  
 Whence widely are the flocks and herds disperst.  
 For this the Gospel and the Doctors great  
 Are quitted, only the Decretal books  
 Are conned, as by their margins you may rate. 135  
 To this the Pope, the Holy College looks,  
 But of that Nazareth where Gabriel  
 His wings unfolded, not a thought he brooks.

But speedily the Vatican, as well

As all th' elected parts of Rome, which were 140  
Graves of those levies, who for Peter fell,  
Shall get their quittance of th' adulterer.

## CANTO X.

His Son regarding with the Love, that hence

And thence eternally doth emanate,

The all-first, inexpressive Excellence

Far as can eyes or minds expatiate,

Has wrought with order such as cannot be

5

But dear to every soul to contemplate.

Lift to these high rotations then with me,

Reader, thine eyes directly toward that part,

Where motion striking motion first we see ;

And there begin to revel upon the art

10

Of Him, who made them, and such loving heed

Has of them, that his eyes do ne'er depart.

Behold the branching circle thence proceed

Obliquely, which the planets doth convey,

To satisfy the world's perpetual need.

15

And if no longer slanting were its way,  
Much heavenly virtue would in vain be spent,  
And wehnigh all power here would faint away.  
And if diverging more or less it went  
From its directness, then would incomplete      20  
Much order rest in earth and firmament.  
Now, good my reader, rest upon thy seat,  
And let thy thought upon this foretaste dwell,  
Which, ere it cloys thee, shall be passing sweet.  
I've set before thee ; for thyself do well ;      25  
Because that record, whereof I sustain  
The charge, doth toward itself my care compell.  
The chiefest Ministrant of Nature's reign,  
By whom the world's with heavenly virtue signed,  
Whose light doth all our seasons ascertain,      30  
In this part entered, which I call to mind,  
Was moving in the spiral courses where  
Day by day faster toward us he must wind.  
And I was with him, but my mounting there  
As little had perceived, as men before      35  
All thought of entered place can be aware.

Lo! such is Beatris, who guides us o'er

So rapidly from good to better site,

Her act is measurable in time no more.

How must that essence in itself be bright, 40

Which in the Sun, wherein I was received,  
Could show itself, and not by hue, but light?

The sight be hoped for, and the thing believed ;

For practice, art, nor genius could avail  
My song, that I should make it thence conceived. 45

And if our fancies such a height to scale

Are feeble, wherefore needs it admiration  
That eyes to reach beyond the sun must fail ?

Such were they, whom in this fourth habitation

The most high Father with the knowledge fed 50  
Of God's Procession and God's Filiation.

And Beatris began, "Give thanks," she said,

"Thanks to that Sun of Angels, by whose grace  
Art thou to such a high perception led."

In mortal heart was ne'er so large a space 55

Found for devotion, ne'er was one so prone  
God's cause with all his loving to embrace,

As, after hearing this, became my own;  
And He my whole desire did so comprise,  
That Beatris forgot in shade was thrown; 60  
Nor grudged she, nay but smiled in such a guise  
That my collected thoughts took various flight  
Before the splendor of the kindling eyes.  
Lo, many a vivid, many a dazzling light,  
Their centre us, themselves our garland made, 65  
All sweet in harmony, as in lustre bright!  
Latona's daughter oft we see arrayed  
With such a girdle, when the moistened air  
With threads to form its tissue is purveyed.  
There's many a gem, so beautiful and rare, 70  
Within the heavenly court, from which I come,  
That such beyond the kingdom none can bear.  
Of which the singings of these lights are some;  
Who makes himself no wings to reach that goal,  
Here let him ask more tidings from the dumb. 75  
Thus singing when these burning suns to roll  
Around us thrice had ceased, like the career  
Of stars adjoining to the firm-set 'pole,

They seemed as ladies from the dance not clear,  
 But hearkening still and silent in suspense 80  
 Till the resumption of the notes they hear.  
 And therewith one of them began, "Sithence  
     The beams of mercy, which to just love lend  
 Its kindling spark, and are augmented thence,  
 Do multiplied to thee their light extend 85  
     So much, that it conducts thee up the stair  
 Which none descendeth but to reascend,  
 If with thy thirst we should refuse to share  
     Wine from our flask, such freedom would be ours,  
 As waters have, which cannot seawards bear. 90  
 Thou wouldest enquire, of what plants are the flowers,  
     That make the garland, which surrounds and wooes  
 Thy lovely liege who thee to heaven empowers.  
 I was a lamb i'th' hallowed fold, for whose  
     Direction Dominic a path has shown, 95  
 Where well they feed, unless themselves they lose.  
 Next on my right is Albert of Cologne,  
     And me Thomas Aquinas thou mayst call,  
 Who him for fellow-monk and master own.

If thou wouldest know these others one and all,

Then let thine eye upon my words attend,

Circling the bliss-abounding coronall.

That second blaze the joys of Gratian send

Abroad, who served both Courts in such a measure  
As rendered him in Paradise a friend. 105

And he who next in place our quire doth pleasure,

Petrus Lombardus, like the widow's mite  
To holy Church made offering of his Treasure.

The fifth amongst us, and the fairest light

So lovingly's inspired, that all folks he 110  
Makes thirst for news of his eternal plight.

In that exalted light was such degree

Of Knowledge set, that if the truth be true,  
There has not risen a second more to see.

Next him the light of that sustainer view, 115

That while he walked in flesh the angelicall  
Nature and functions most profoundly knew.

And smiling in that further light so small

Thou seest a champion of the Christian creed,  
Whose Latin Austin stored himself withal. 120

Now, if the eye-beam of thy mind proceed  
 From light to light, the follower of my praise,  
 To know the eighth already thou wilt need.  
 There blessed from beholding all good stays  
 That soul untarnished, who the treacherous lease, 125  
 If well perused, of worldly joys displays.  
 That body, whence her violent decease  
 She made, Cieldauro covers, and she ran  
 From pangs and exile into th' endless peace.  
 Beyond thou mayst the flaming lustre scan      130  
 Of Isidore, of Bede, and that *Richart*  
 Who was in contemplation more than man.  
 And he, from whom thy looks returning are  
 To me, a spirit was, that in austere  
 Deep musings often thought death kept too far.      135  
 That is the light eternal of Sigier,  
 Who while in *Rue de Fouarre* his days he wore,  
 Has argued hateful truths in haughtiest ear."  
 Now, like the peals that summon us, before  
 The Bride goes forth, her mattin song to make 140  
 To Christ her Lord, that he may love her more,

Which now to this, now that part, pull and shake,  
Sounding their ding-dong in so sweet a tone  
That well disposèd hearts to love they wake,  
Thus I perceived that high and glorious zone      145  
To move, and voice to answer voice in measure  
And mood, whose like for sweetness are unknown,  
Save where is perpetuity of pleasure.

## CANTO XI.

O **MAD** anxieties of human kind !

How inconclusive are the syllogisms,  
That make ye downward keep your wings inclined !  
One man the Canons, one the Aphorisms

Was turning, one man for a priesthood sued,        5  
One sought a realm by violence or by schisms,  
One robbery, one affairs of state pursued,

He gave himself to idleness, and he  
Was making himself weary — to be lewd.

When I, from these, and all the like set free,        10

Aloft with Beatris in heavenly land  
Was being entertained so gloriously.

When each the circle had remeasured, and

Returning, halted where his previous site  
He held, as tapers in the lustre stand,        15.

I was aware of words within the light  
Arising, whence before I was addrest,  
The while it smiling grew more glorious white.  
“As kindled by his ardor is my breast,  
So I, by looking on the light eterne,                  20  
Perceive thy thoughts, whereof thou reasonest.  
Thou doubtest, and, my meaning to discern,  
Thy powers a more unravelled language need,  
More plain, by which they can more smoothly learn,  
Concerning how I said, ‘Where well they feed,’    25  
And eke, ‘no second hath arisen,’ and here  
To well distinguish must we take good heed.  
That Providence, who rules the world’s career  
With order, wherein all created eyes  
Fall short, ere to the bottom they come near,              30  
To make the Bride of Him, who with loud cries  
Espoused her in his blessed blood, pursue  
That road, on which her satisfaction lies,  
More fearlessly, and to himself more true,  
Ordained in her behalf, that so she might              35  
Have each way one to guide her, guardians two.

In ardor was the one seraphic quite,  
 The other, by his wisdom, came to lend  
 To earth a splendor of cherubic light :  
 I'll speak of one, for either to commend      40  
     Is both to mention, take whiche'er you will,  
 For one was of their double ways the end.  
 There hangs between Tupîno and the rill  
     That on the mount, which blest Ubaldo chose,  
 Is born, a fruitful slope o' th' lofty hill ;      45  
 Whence frost or heat upon Perugia flows  
     Through Porta Solè, and behind it wails  
 Gualdo, with Nôcera, hard oppression's woes,  
 Above that bank, where most the steepness fails,  
     Hath on the world a Sun made like ascent      50  
 As ours doth, when from Ganges heaven he scales.  
 Which place then whosoever names, if bent  
     To speak, as may not misbecome its worth,  
 Should not Ascêsi say, but Orient.  
 The time was not far distant from his birth,      55  
     When from his wondrous properties began  
 Some consolation to be felt on earth.

Since for a lady, whom another man  
As lief as death had from his chamber door  
Excluded, into variance he ran 60

A young man with his father, and before  
His ghostly court, *et coram patre* made  
Her his, and day by day then loved her more.  
She, parted from her first espoused, had stayed  
Eleven full hundred years, despised and drear 65  
Till this man came—her love had no one prayed.  
Nor aught availed it, that his voice to hear  
Nought dreading, she with Amyclas was found  
By one, who overspread the world with fear.  
Nor aught, in faith and courage to abound 70  
So highly, that with Christ upon the tree  
She mounted up, while Mary kept on ground.  
But lest too intricate my language be,  
Take thou henceforward for this loving pair  
In speech detailed, Francis and Poverty. 75

Their singleness of heart and gladsome air,  
And love, and rapture, and their glances kind,  
To many a holy thought incentives were.

The venerable Bernard thence resigned  
 His shoes the first, and after bliss so great 80  
 Ran forth, and, running, thought he lagged behind.  
 O wealth unknown, O truly blissful state!  
 Behind the bridegroom now Egidius bares,  
 Sylvester now; so dear the bride they rate.

Then forth that father and that master fares 85  
 Together with his Wife and with his race,  
 And each with him the lowly girdle shares.  
 Nor drooped he out of cowardice his face,  
 For being Pietro Bernardonë's *chield*,  
 Nor for his estimation wondrous base, 90  
 But royally to Innocent revealed  
 His rugged purpose, and from him the grant  
 Obtained, by which his rule was firstly sealed.  
 Then as increased the nation mendicaunt  
 In following him, whose wondrous life they would  
 Better in empyrean glory chaunt, 96  
 The course that holy Mandriarch pursued  
 Through Pope Honorius with a crown more late  
 Was gifted by the eternal Sanctitude.

And when, from thirsting for the Martyr's fate, 100

In the proud Sultan's presence to propound  
Of Christ he came, and every his comate,  
And for conversion when unripe he found  
The nation there, and, not to work in vain,  
Came back to harvests of the Italian ground, 105  
Of Christ he did the latest seal obtain,

(Which two long years his body bore,) between  
Tybris and Arno, on the rocks of pain.

When God, by whom such Weal to him had been  
Appointed, called him, that reward to see, 110  
Which he acquired in making himself mean,  
Then, dying, to his brethren trusted he  
As to just heirs, and bade that with sincere  
Faith they should love her, his most dear ladye.

And 'twas her breast that soul without a peer 115  
Chose to depart from, toward his own Domain,  
And else would for his body have no bier.

Think now, what man was worthy to sustain,  
With such a one confederate, Peter's bark,  
To harbor pushing straight through high-wrought  
main ? 120

And such thou must declare our Patriarch ;  
 Hence he, that follows him, and that obeys,  
 (Thou 'lt see) a goodly venture must embark.  
 But now so greedy is the flock to graze  
 On variable swards, that help is none,      125  
 But over meadows far apart it strays.  
 And aye as farther from his face they run,  
 And as they straggle more, the emptier aye  
 Of milk returneth to the fold each one.  
 There are, who truly fear the scath, and nigh      130  
 The shepherd throng ; yet have so few occurred  
 That but a little cloth may cowls supply.  
 Now, if not hoarsely uttered be my word,  
 If duly thy attention hath been lent,  
 If thou recall to mind what thou hast heard ;      135  
 Thy wishes this in one part may content ;  
 For thou wilt know this brotherhood—from whose  
 Stock they fall off—and see what thing is meant,  
 By ‘ well they feed, unless themselves they lose.’ ”

## CANTO XII.

As soon as e'er that blessed flame the sound  
    Of his last word had finished, all its throng  
That holy disk began to turn around.  
And through one circle ere they past along,  
    I saw another ring about them close,         5  
And movement link with movement, song with song.  
That song as much beyond our Muses rose,  
    Our Sirens, warbling in their dulcet flute,  
As the first lustre its reflex outgoes.  
As over downy clouds two arches shoot,         10  
    And like in colors, like in path they run,  
When Juno's maid her charge would execute,  
The outer springing from the inmost one,  
    (As 't were the voice of that fair damsel who  
Consumed in Love, as vapors in the Sun;)         15

Which renders people here prophetic through  
 That covenant, which God to Noë sware,  
 That waters shall no more the world undo,  
 So twined about us these perpetual-fair

Roses their double wreath, so might I see      20  
 The farther one the nearer's likeness bear.

Now when the dance, and all the jubilee,

Not only of the singing, but the blaze  
 Of light to light in loving game and glee,  
 Ceast at one will, one moment, as obeys

Each eyelid simultaneously the claim  
 Of our free will, to shut them or to raise ;  
 So heard I, deep within a new-come flame,

A voice, that like the needle to the pole  
 Made me appear, in turning, whence it came.      30

“The love, that makes me fair,” he said, “my soul

Invites, to reason of yon other guide,  
 Through whom doth he so well my guide extoll.

Where one is, there ’tis fitting by his side

To bring his fellow, that as in one sphere      35  
 They fought, their glory too may shine allied.

The Lord Christ's army, whom it cost so dear  
Rearming, marched behind his colors few  
In numbers, faint of limb, and sad of cheer ;  
When th' Emperor, who reigneth all time through, 40  
For his emperilled host his care bestirred,  
Through his mere bounty, not for guerdon due,  
And succored his Espoused, as thou hast heard,  
By these two champions, who the routed band  
Brought to their ranks by deed alike and word. 45  
Lo, where the tender leaflets to expand,  
That reapparel in their fresh array  
All Europe, goeth forth the West wind bland,  
Not far, from where the billows turn to spray,  
Behind whose column from all living eyes 50  
The sun is often hid by length of way,  
There fortunate doth Callaroga rise,  
Protected by the mighty shield, that shows  
The Lion, who subdues, and subject lies.  
'Tis hence the amorous paramour arose 55  
Of Christian faith, that athlete sanctified  
Who loved her friends, and tendered not her foes ;

Whose mind, from its creation, was supplied  
 With living virtue, such that while its power  
 Within his mother wrought, she prophesied. 60

When solemnized had been the bridal hour  
 Betwixt the faith and him at holy fount,  
 Where mutual salvation was the dower,  
 The lady, who had vowed on his account, 64

Saw dreaming that, which would from him proceed,  
 And from his heirs—how wondrous its amount.  
 And hence, that word and fact might be agreed,  
 (A spirit moving them,) his name was made

From that possessive, which he was indeed,  
 Dominicus, and I would have him weighed 70

As that elected husbandman, whom Christ  
 Within his vineyard called to give him aid.

A Servant and Ambassador of Christ

Well seemed he, for the love he first made known  
 Was for the counsel earliest given of Christ. 75

Oft has he, silent, waking and alone,  
 Been found by her who nurst him, on the earth,  
 As one who said, 'This portion is my own.'

O truly was the author of his birth  
 Called Felix, truly was his mother Jane                    80  
 (If our interpretation aught be worth,)  
 Not from the world, for which men strive and strain  
 In Ostiensis and Thaddeo's trace,  
 But counting the true manna for their gain.  
 A doctor great he grew in little space;                    85  
 And entered on the circuit of the Vine,  
 That fadeth soon, if husbandmen are base.  
 Before the Chair, that once was more benign  
 To righteous poor men, though not hers the blame,  
 But that successor's, who corrupts the line,                90  
 Not for the next spare benefice he came,                 "  
 Not to commute for six with two and three,  
 Not tithes, which are the poor of God's, to claim,  
 But 'gainst an erring world petitioned he  
 For leave to combat for the seed, whence four        95  
 And twenty plants are now encircling thee.  
 Then, armed with both authority and lore,  
 In functions apostolic, sallied out,  
 Like torrents, urged up from deep water-store.

\* \* \* \* \* 100

\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

Of him there since hath issued many a rill,  
By which the Catholic Gardens watered are,  
So that the plants are fresh and verdant still. 105

Look now, if such was one wheel of the car,  
By which the holy Church herself defended,  
And conquered in the field her civil jar,  
Well may the excellence be comprehended

Of the other one, which ere I met thy view, 110  
Was by our Thomas courteously commended.

But now the track its higher portion drew  
In its revolving has been lost, and where  
Was wine upon its lees, is must in lieu.

His company, who started straight and fair, 115  
With feet upon his track, are turnèd so  
That 'gainst the hindmost kick the foremost there.

But of their evil tillage they shall know  
The harvest, when the tares, that grew between  
The wheat, shall grieve the garner to forego. 120

I own indeed, if leaf by leaf were seen  
 Our volume, here and there a page you'd find  
 Wherin to read 'I am as I have been.'  
 But these will not be of Casalè's mind,  
 Nor Acquasparta's, wherewith some the scroll 125  
 Discuss, who slacken, some who stricter bind.  
 For me, I am Bonaventura's soul  
 Of Bagnoregio, who did always in  
 Great works the minor interest control.  
 Illuminâto's here, and Augustin, 130  
 Who of the bare-foot meek welnigh before  
 All others girt himself, God's praise to win.  
 Here by their side are *Hugo St. Victor*,  
 Peter Hispanus, who to th' eyes of man  
 Shines in twelve volumes, Peter Mangiador, 135  
 Nathan the Seer, the Metropolitan  
 Chrysostomus, Anselmus, CÆlius,  
 Who deigned the earliest of arts to scan,  
 Rabanus, and next me, Joachimus,  
 Calabrian Abbot, who with prophecy  
 Was gifted; I with language emulous 140

Was moved with such a paladin to vie  
By the choice diction and warm courtesie  
Of Brother Thomas, and not only I,  
But with me roused was all this companie."      145

## CANTO XIII.

IMAGINE, whoso would conceive aright  
All I beheld, and, while I speak, retain  
The image, firm as rock upon its site,  
Five stars and ten, that each in his domain  
Do heaven illumine with a light so clear,        5  
As can no bars of atmosphere refrain.  
Imagine too that Wain, for whose career  
Our heaven has lap enough from morn to morn,  
Nor lets it slip, howso the pole may veer ;  
And therewith take the mouth of yonder horn        10  
That springeth forward from the axle's end,  
About which are the first rotations born ;  
Imagine all these in two signs to blend  
I' th' figure, that from Minos' daughter rose,  
When cold she felt the damps of death descend.        15

And let one ring the other's beams enclose,  
 And let them both revolve in such a guise,  
 That forward these may turn, and backward those.  
 And you'll the shadow have before your eyes  
 Of the true dance and double constellation,      20  
 That did the place, in which I stood, comprise.  
 For truly as the rapidest heaven's rotation  
 Outstrips the gliding of La Chiâna, so  
 Exceeded these things all our observation.  
 They sang not Pæan there, nor Evee, no,      25  
 But how three persons in God's nature meet,  
 And this and man's into one person flow.  
 Now was the measure and the song complete,  
 And all on us these holy lights intent  
 Were blest, in changing care to care as sweet.      30  
 The silence of the Gods consentient  
 Was broken by the Light, that in applause  
 Of God's meek servant wondrous words had spent,  
 Who said, " Since one is winnowed of the straws,  
 Since in the garner is bestowed the grain,      35  
 To beat that second one sweet love me draws.

Thou deem'st, that in the bosom, whence was ta'en  
That rib, of which was wrought the cheek so clear,  
Whose palate was to all the world a bane,  
And eke in that, which traversed by the spear,      40  
    And after, and before, made recompense,  
By which to be atoned no fault is dear,  
All light, that falls within the competence  
    Of human nature to receive, was shed  
By their joint Maker's power and excellence.      45  
And hence thou marvellest at what I said,  
    Declaring, that the gift in yonder light,  
The fifth in place, was unattendant.  
Now on my answer fix thy mind aright,  
    And see, how in the truth my words and thy      50  
Belief, like rays in centre, shall unite :  
All mortal things, and all, that cannot die,  
    Are only Splendors of the Thought divine,  
Whom, loving, bringeth forth our Parent high.  
That living light, that from his glow doth shine,      55  
    Dilating, and that ne'er can be undone  
From him, and from the Love, that makes them trine,

In bounty causes that its rays should run  
 Together, mirrored-like, on beings new,  
 Itself eternally remaining One. 60

This to the last creative agents through  
 Grade after grade so tempered maketh way,  
 That only small and maimed results ensue,  
 Contingencies, and let the term convey  
 All generated things, that or by seeds, 65  
 Or seedless, heaven produces by its sway.  
 Of these the matter, and the craft that kneads,  
 Are not alike ; hence more or less behind  
 The ideal standard each effect recedes.

'Tis hence, that out of trees alike in kind  
 Comes worse or better fruit, and even so  
 Are men born, matched unequally in mind.  
 If tempered perfectly the wax should flow,  
 And heaven's fairest influence partake,  
 The Prototype would all its glory show. 75

But therein Nature cannot else than make  
 A diminution, as the craftsman might  
 Who mastery hath of art, and hands that quake.

And hence, if Fire of Love the all-clear Light  
Of Power creative hath disposed and swayed, 80  
There all perfection needs must find a site.  
So rendered meet was Earth to be arrayed  
With forms of perfect life through glade and  
fen,  
So was to be with Child the Virgin made.  
And therefore I commend thy verdict, when 85  
Thou deemest, Nature never was before,  
Nor shall be after, as in these two men.  
Now then, if I should say to thee no more  
Thy next first words, 'How could this other  
stand  
Without a rival,' would no doubt explore. 90  
And therefore, that the secret may be scanned,  
Consider, who he was, and what the thing,  
When God said ask, that guided his demand.  
Enough is said, to show thee, that a King  
He was, who for this purpose Wisdom sought, 95  
That fitted he might be for governing,

Not, of these heavenly Movers to be taught  
 The number, not to know, if out of Must  
 And Mayhap ever can a Must be brought ;  
 Not 'Motum primum dare' if 'tis just,                   100  
 Not if in circumscribing demi-round  
 A Trigon, not right-angled, can be thrust.  
 If this thou mark, and what I else propound,  
 Lo, Royal Prudence was that non-pareil  
 Sight, whereto my discourse's march was bound.   105  
 And the word 'ris'n' if thou remarkest well,  
 It bears on kings alone, thou wilt perceive,  
 Of whom are many, and few the good to tell.  
 Do thou, distinguishing, these words receive,  
 And, touching our first Parent and our Joy,           110  
 They will consist with all thou dost believe.  
 And this like lead about thy feet employ,  
 That slowly they may trudge to Yes or No,  
 In things thou seest not, like a wayworn boy.  
 For sure amongst all fools he ranketh low,           115  
 Who aught, without distinguishing, denies,  
 Or vouches, to whatever texts he go.

For oft in quickly-formed opinion lies  
An oversight, which taketh Falsehood's part,  
And then our judgement predilection ties.      120  
And worse than vainly from the coast depart  
(For they return not as they went on board)  
They that would fish for Truth, and lack the art.  
And hereof let Parmenides afford  
Proof, and Melissos, Bryso, and many schools, 125  
Who rusht, and knew not what they hurry tow'r'd.  
So did Sabellus, Arius, all the fools,  
That have been mangling swords to Holy Writ,  
In turning well-set faces from its rules.  
And let not folk in judging trust their wit      130  
Too fast, as one who counteth up the corn  
In 's field before the Sun has ripened it;  
For I have all through winter seen a thorn  
Appearing foisonless and obdurate,  
Which then the rose upon the sprig hath borne: 135  
And I have seen a ship, that swift and straight  
Has run upon the midsea all her race,  
And perished, entering at the harbor gate.

Let not squire Timothy and mistress Grace,  
Because they see one filch, another pray, 140  
Suppose, they see them as before God's face ;  
For he may rise, and he may fall away."

## CANTO XIV.

FROM rim to center, and from center out  
To rim, the water vibrates in a bowl,  
As from within 'tis stricken, or without.  
This thing, I speak of, made a sudden roll  
Upon my mind, at hearing to its close       5  
The speech of Thomas his triumphant soul,  
By reason of the likeness which arose  
Between his words and those of Beatris,  
Who next him thus to speak in bounty chose.  
"There is another truth, of which to miss       10  
The root he would be loth, although he saith  
Nought yet, by tongue, nor in his thoughts of this.  
Tell him—the light, which overblossometh  
Your substance, hath it to remain with you  
Through all eternity, as now it doth?       15

And if it so remaineth, tell him too,  
 How shall your eyes not be discomfited,  
 When you corporeal have been made anew ? ”  
 As, by new sudden gladness urged and sped,  
     I have seen all that in the dance careered,         20  
 Lifting their voice, and blither in their tread,  
 So when the warm, free-hearted prayer they heard,  
     Began those hallowed rings new joy to show,  
 In both the lilting, and the melody weird.  
 What man complaineth, we must die below         25  
     To live exalted there? he ill perceiveth  
 The balm of th’ everlasting overflow.  
 That One and Two and Three, who always liveth,  
     And reigneth always in Three, Two and One,  
 Limitless, and to all their limits giveth,         30  
 Was sungen thrice among the spirits, none  
     Abstaining, uttering such melodiousness,  
 As might have recompenst all good works done.  
 And from the light divinest in the less  
     Of those two rings a modest voice, may be         35  
 As was that Angel’s, who did Mary bless,

Began, "As long time as the jubilee  
Of Paradise shall last, our love shall make  
So long its vesture of this radiancy.  
Our brightness from our heat, our heat shall take 40  
Proportion from our insight, this from grace  
Which each above his merit shall partake.  
Our person shall be dearer in God's face  
From its rebuilding, when the glorious  
And hallowed body it shall re-embrace. 45  
Thence will increase the light gratuitous,  
That Sovran Goodness will on us bestow,  
Light, which on Him to look empowereth us ;  
And thereby shall our insight greater grow,  
So shall the ardor, which is thereby lit, 50  
So shall the rays, that from this ardor flow.  
But as you see the brands, that flame emit  
Around them, and their own distinctness hold  
From their keen whiteness overpowering it,  
So must the light, which doth us now enfold, 55  
Be past in glory by those bodies bright,  
The same that, late and early, mix with mould.

Nor shall we be fatigued by so much light,  
 For strong the organs of the new-made men  
 Shall wax, to bear all workings of delight." 60  
 So prompt and eager both the rings were then,  
 That well they seemed to cherish true desires  
 For their cold bodies, when they called Amen,  
 Perhaps not for themselves, but for their Sires,  
 Their mothers, and for all that had been dear, 65  
 Or ever they became perpetual fires.  
 And lo ! another brightness 'gan appear  
 Around us, whence the former doubled grew,  
 As when the horizon shall be waxing clear.  
 And as our heaven at evening fall the new 70  
 Appearances beginneth to disclose,  
 When that, which seemeth, hardly seemeth true,  
 So there new beings on my prospect rose,  
 Methought, and round the first circumference  
 And second seemed a circle to compose. 75  
 O very blaze o' th' holiest Effluence !  
 How rapid, and how furnace-white its glare  
 Upon the quailing windows of my sense !

But Beatris, so beaming and so fair  
She met me, that untold the sight must be        80  
With more, that never memory can repair.  
And thence mine eyes regained ability  
To lift themselves up, and I found me fled  
Alone to loftier bliss with my Ladye.  
I well discerned, that I was higher sped,        85  
From the star's beaming with the tint of flame,  
And quite, methought, beyond his custom red.  
With all my heart, and language that the same  
In all mankind is, unto God I made  
Whole offering, such as the new grace became.        90  
And ere the sacrifices's heat could fade  
From all my bosom, I had cause to know,  
That welcomed and accepted thanks I paid:  
For such a radiant, such a crimson glow  
Of lights appeared to me in twofold lines,        95  
That "O the Sun," I cried, "who pranks them so."  
As pattern'd with great lights and smaller shines  
Between the poles of heaven the Milky Way,  
That men of wisdom to much doubt inclines,

So constellated here did ray with ray 100

In Mars his heart that hallowed sign compose,  
That quadrants joined upon a ring display.

My memory here my utterance outgoes,

For blazoned on that Cross beheld I Christ,  
Such as I find no type that fitly shows. 105

But whoso takes his Cross, and follows Christ,

May well excuse me that, I leave untried,  
When lightening on that Rood he seeth Christ.

'Twixt base and summit, and from side to side,

Were moving lights, which flasht in keener sort 110  
To those they met, and those they past beside,  
As particles we see, some long, some short,

Some slow, some rapid, always fresh arrayed,  
A-moving, some directly, some athwart,  
Upon the sunbeam, that divides the shade, 115

Which people to defend themselves, by fruit  
Of workmanship and industry, have made.

And as from timely touch of harp and lute

On many chords a tinkling sweet is heard  
By those who keep not with their tune afoot, 120

So sounded from the lights, which there appeared,

Through all the Cross a melody gathering in,

That ravished me, distinguishing no word.

Well could I learn, high praises were therein ;

For unto me there came, as one whose ear, 125

Not mind receives it, "Rise thou up and win."

This it so much enamored me to hear,

That nought which I had met before this date

So sweetly to embind me did appear.

My words may seem too bold, to underrate 130

The pleasure from those beautifullest eyes,

To look on which doth all my wants amate.

But he, who marks, that heaven's living dyes

Act best in highest place on all fair hues,

And that I had not there beheld those eyes, 135

May well excuse me, that which I accuse

To vindicate, and of my truth be sure,

For nought do I that holy pleasure's dues

Withhold, since mounting up it grows more pure.

## CANTO XV.

BOUNTY, that dew to which resolves itself  
Affection, where it uncorrupted rose,  
As doth th' unrighteous into love of pelf,  
Did stillness on that luscious lyre impose,  
And every sacred chord it quieted, 5  
Which slack or tense in th' hand of Heaven grows.  
How hardly shall one righteous prayer be said  
In vain to beings, who for this alone  
That I might ask them, were to silence led.  
Well merit they to make perpetual moan, 10  
Who for affection unto aught that dies  
Within the bounds of Time, such Love disown.  
As through the limpid and hushed evening skies  
May dart a sudden fire before our face,  
That makes to flinch the unregarding eyes, 15

And seems a star removing from its place,

Except that nothing, where it catches light  
Is lost, and it remains but little space,  
So from the arm, that stretches to the right,

Down to this Cross'es foot, there ran a star  
From off the figure, which here burneth bright.  
Nor from its setting went the gem out far

Or near, but o'er the radial lines it wheeled,  
Lustrous, like fire through alabaster jar.

Such tenderness Anchises' shade revealed, 25

If our high muse's word for Truth may pass,  
His son perceiving in th' Elysian field.

"Myne ownè blode ! ah riche outpourèd grace !

To whome of mennès children hath the gate  
Of heven twyse opned bene, as in thy caas ? " 30  
So spake this brightness, whom to contemplate

I turned, then on my lady, and surprise  
I drew from each of overpowering weight.  
For such a fire was radiant in her eyes,

That mine, methought, had reached the farthest  
bound 35

Of God's indulgence, and my paradise.

Again that spirit, blithe in mien and sound,  
Linked words upon the former, whereof nought  
I understood; their aim was too profound;  
Nor that obscurity by choice he sought,      40  
But took perforce, because above the norm  
Of human understanding soared his thought.  
But when the bow of that affection warm  
Was so dischargèd, that his speech descended  
Enough with our perceptions to conform,      45  
The words of his, that first I comprehended,  
Were, "Ever be thou blest, O Three and One,  
Who in my lineage hast so condescended;"  
And next, "A long and dear desire, O Son,  
That came by reading in that volume vast,      50  
Where blank or letter done was ne'er undone,  
Within the light, that speaks to thee, thou hast  
Concluded; therefore ever thankt be she,  
Who donned thee plumes for such a flight to last.  
Thou thinkest, that thy thought derives to me      55  
From that, which is the first, as four or five  
Radiates from cognizance of unity.

Hence what I am, and wherefore I arrive  
More joyous, thou dost not enquire, than all  
My comrades near thee in the mirth-rich hive. 60  
And rightly dost thou think, for great and small  
Who live with us, that mirror's sight partake,  
Where thy thought's copies, ere thou thinkest, fall.  
But that the sacred love, in which I wake  
With eyes still-opened, and which makes me thirst  
In sweet desiring, I may better slake, 66  
Let now thy want, thy longing be rehearst  
In confident and bold and blithesome key,  
To which my answer is determined erst.”  
I turned me unto Beatris, and she 70  
Heard ere I asked, and smiled me such assent  
As in the wings of will replumaged me.  
And I began, “Your skill and your intent,  
Since the first Equal it was yours to greet,  
In counterpoising weights to each are lent. 75  
Because so equal are the light and heat  
I' th' Sun, that warmeth and enlighteneth you,  
That all comparisons are incomplete.

But Will and Skill in that which mortals do,

For such good reason as to you is clear,

Are hawks that with unequal wings pursue.

In this unequalness I must appear

As mortal, and do hence no thanks recite

Save in my heart to thy parental cheer.

I therefore pray thee, living chrysolite,

Who such a costly jewel doth engem,

Grant me, by knowledge of thy name, delight."

"Dear branch of mine," began his answer then,

"In whom I joyed while only waiting till

I might behold thee, lo, I was thy stem.

One, who a hundred years and more yon Hill

In the first range hath circled, to thy line

Gave that appellative it beareth still.

Among thy fathers he was third, and mine

Own offspring ; the long toil he had to taste

Might well be shortened by good works of thine.

Florence, within that ancient boundary placed,

From which she taketh matin hours and noon,

Abode in peace yet, sober and shamefaced.

80

85

90

95

No crownets, and no tinsel'd ladies' shoon, 100  
 No chains, no girdles of such costliness  
 As oft the claims of person might impugn.  
 Not yet did every daughter's birth distress  
 Her father, for the dower and nubile age  
 Not yet eschewed the mean for more and less. 105  
 No mansion yet was made a hermitage ;  
 Not yet was by Sardanapalus shown  
 What wars a Man may in the chamber wage.  
 Nor yet had Montemâlo been outflown  
 By your Uccelatoi', which shall surpass 110  
 In being, swiftly as it rose, o'erthrown.  
 I've seen Bellincion Bêrti girded pass  
 With bone and leather, and his lady fair  
 Depart unpainted from her looking glass.  
 I've seen the Nêrlis' and the Vecchio's Heir 115  
 In bull-hide, and their ladies to endure  
 To ply the needle and the yarn prepare.  
 O fortunates, and every she was sure  
 Of decent burial, and to leave her bed  
 No Frankish commerce could the bridegroom lure! 120

Then one, a-watching by the cradle's head,  
 I th' language, that to parents giveth joy  
 As soon as heard, things comfortable said ;  
 And one with flax and spindle would employ  
     Her fingers, and amongst her maidens tell a     125  
 Tale of the Romans, Fesulæ, or Troy.  
 As great a marvel Lupo Salterello  
     Would then have been as Cincinnatus now,  
 And as Cornelia would have been Cianghella.  
 To a civic life thou seest how goodly, how     130  
     Reposeful, fellow citizens how leal,  
 How sweet a homestead, Mary, with loud vow  
 Solicited, gave me, and of Christ the seal  
     I took within your ancient Baptistere,  
 As Caçciaguida for his Commonweal.     135  
 Moronto, Eliseo, my brothers were ;  
     My lady from the Vale of Po I brought,  
 Of whom thy name deriveth, Alighier.  
 The Camp of Emperor Conrad then I sought,  
     And by him was I girded for his knight,     140  
 So well I pleased him, for I bravely wrought.

I followed him, yon wicked faith to fight,  
Whose votaries by your Shepherd's fault despoil  
Your Jurisdiction of its native right.

By this unholy people from the coil

145

Of the false world obtained I my release,  
(Ah World, whose love doth many a spirit soil,)  
And entered out of Martyrdom this Peace.

## CANTO XVI.

O PIGMY nobleness of earthly lines !

If people needs must glory in thy sense  
Below, where our unsound affection pines,  
No wonder thereto will I more dispense,  
For in that heaven, where appetite astray        5  
Is never to be drawn, I glорied hence.  
In truth thy mantle quickly doth decay—  
Time goes around it with diminishing shears,  
Except we piece new cloth on, day by day.  
That plural You commenced my words, which ears 10  
Of Romans have been foremost to abide,  
And which to use her clan least perseveres.  
Whence Beatris, who stood not far aside,  
In smiling at me seemed like her who caught  
At the first fault we read of Arthur's bride.        15

“ You are,” I said, “ my father ; you aloft  
 So raise me, that above myself I grow,  
 Toward you my speech all fearfulness hath doft.  
 So many streams of joyance overflow  
 My mind, that farther I delight herein,                  20  
 That it succumbs not, and upbears them so.  
 Now tell me then, dear founder of my kin,  
 What ancestors were yours, what years are gone  
 Since those that saw your infancy begin ?  
 Tell me about the sheepfold of St. John,                  25  
 What numbers owned it, and in heavenly height  
 Who were among them worthiest of a throne ? ”  
 As from the breathing of the wind more bright  
 A crimson o'er the burning charcoal flies,  
 So beamed at my love's utterance this light.                  30  
 And as he met more beautiful mine eyes,  
 So with more amiable a voice and sweet,  
 He answered, though not in this modern guise,  
 And, “ from the day,” said he, “ that heard Heaven  
 greet  
 The Virgin, to the lightening of her womb                  35  
 Who bare me, and hath now with Saints a seat,

Had entered in her native Lion's home

Five hundred times and fourscore times this flame,  
Beneath his feet her ardors to relume.

My parents and I too from that part came 40

In which begins the Sextum, whereto reach  
The runners latest in your annual game.  
So much about my ancestors to teach

Sufficeth ; as to whence, and who they were,  
More comely shall be reticence than speech. 45

All, who between Mars and the Baptist were

To carry weapons able, not one man  
To five would make for those now living there.

But then within the meanest artisan

Our civic blood, unblent with Certaldese, 50  
Or with the Campian, or Figghînish, ran.

O how much better to keep such as these

Your outdoor neighbors, and by Trespiâñ  
Or by Gallûzzo set your boundaries,

Than to comprise them, and endure a spawn 55

Like Aguglionè's and La Signa's hind,  
Whose eyes for truckling always are indrawn.

If that race, which hath most on earth declined,  
Had unto Cæsar not the step-dame<sup>r</sup> played,  
But been, like mother to her offspring, kind,       60  
There's many a Florentine can truck and trade,  
Who might have now gone back to Simifonti,  
There, where his ancestor the rounds hath made.  
Then Montemûrlo's lords might be the Conti,  
Acône's parish might the Cêrchi bound,       65  
Yea, Valdigrêve haply the Buondelmonti.  
In merging nationalities the ground  
At all times lay, when nations could not thrive,  
As meats ill mixed the bodily health confound.  
And sightless bulls to heavier downfall drive       70  
Than lambs that are so, and one rapier can  
Cut often more, and cleaner than the five.  
If thou dost Luni and Urbisaglia scan,  
How they have dwindled, and now Clusium hies  
With Sinigaglia down the road they ran,       75  
To hear, how from the world one lineage dies,  
Thou wilt for nothing new or wondrous treat,  
For mother-cities reach their term likewise.

All your belongings are of Death the meat,  
 As you are, but in some 't will not appear, 80  
 Since long their lasting, and your lives are fleet.  
 Look, how the rolling of the Moon her Sphere  
 Skarfs and unskarfs the strands without repose ;  
 So Florence in vicissitudes doth veer.  
 Thou shouldst not wonder then, when I disclose 85  
 The doings of these ancient Florentines,  
 Upon whose fame now Time his cover throws.  
 I saw the Ughis, and the Catellines,  
 Filippis, Ormans, Grecis, Alberics,  
 Waning already, civic illustrious lines. 90  
 And I have seen, as prosperous as antique,  
 Sannella's house, and that of Soldanier,  
 The Arcas, and Ardinghis and Bostics.  
 Above the gates, which now the burthen bear  
 Of treasons new-concocted, so immense, 95  
 That soon the barks to lighten you'll prepare,  
 Dwelt Ravignânis, where his residence  
 Count Guido left, with all men that have ta'en  
 The glorious Bellincionè's name sithence.

Then Della Pressa knew how Heaven would reign 100  
By Cæsar, and our Galigâyo's state.  
Then did the gilded haft and hilt maintain.  
Still was the Column of the ermines great,  
The Giochis, Gallis, Sifantis, Baruçcis,  
Sacchettis, and the clan which bears the stain 105  
Of measures falsified, and your Calfuçcis  
Their older stock yet flourished, and to Chairs  
Curule were Siziis brought, and Arriguçcis.  
How great I saw the house, that meanly fares  
Now from their pride, and aye the balls of gold 110  
Led Florence flourishing in her grand affairs.  
Thus wrought the fathers in the days of old  
Of those who, when your Church a pastor lacks,  
Grow corpulent, and consistories hold.  
That overweening race, who at the backs 115  
Of fugitives are dragons, lambs to all  
That show their teeth, or offer them their tax,  
Already entered, but with menay small;  
And much disliked it Ubertin Donâto  
Through his belsire his kinsman them to call. 120

Already had Caponsacco to Mercâto

Come down from Fesulæ, already leal  
Burghers were Giúda, but and Infangâto.

A true and wondrous thing I'll not conceal ; 124

They reached the smaller Precincts, where the gate  
Bore Della Pêra's name, unblamed by zeal.

All, who in the fair crest participate  
Of the great paramount, whose name and praise

The festivals of Thomas reinstate,

Derived of him their martial rank and bays, 130

Though now the people's side hath many got,  
Who in their quarterings the same emblaze.

The Importûno and the Gualterot

Already throve, and Borgo yet might be  
More tranquil, if new neighbors it had not. 135

The house that sorrows made you first to see,

By the just vengeance, that hath you destroyed,  
And ended all your life of harmony,  
That house with its allies fair fame enjoyed !

O Buondelmonte, why didst thou, beset 140  
By others' instances, that league avoid ?

There's many a mourner would be jocund yet,  
Had God vouchsafed thee to the Naiad's bed,  
That day, when first in town thy feet were set. 144  
Yon battered stone \*, that guards the bridge's head,  
Would still on Florence for a victim seize,  
Before his grudging could be quieted.  
Among these clans, and many more like these,  
I have known Florence in such happy chance,  
As one who cause for weeping never sees. 150  
I've seen her people under these advance  
So good and glorious, that the fleur-de-lis  
Had never been reversed upon the lance,  
Nor scarlet-dyed by civic enmities.

\* The "Mars" of line 46.; v. Inf. 13. 143.

## CANTO XVII.

As came for reassurance from his ill  
Report, which he had heard, to Clymenè  
One \*, who to sons makes fathers chary still,  
So stood I minded ; so was felt to be  
By Beatris, and by that sacred fire, 5  
Who shifted at the first his place for me.  
“Allow,” she said, “the flare of thy desire  
To find its issue, so that moulded well  
By thy internal man, it may suspire ;  
Not that thy speaking may our knowledge swell, 10  
Nay, but that thou mayst practice win hereby,  
When men should pour thee out, thy thirst to tell.”

\* Phäeton.

“O dear my root, who lifted art so high,  
That just as mortal minds the trigon see,  
How therein two right angles cannot lie,                  15  
So thou discernest all contingency,  
Ere it be fact, upon that point intent  
Where present are all tenses of *To Be* ;  
Whilst I, accompanying Virgil, went,  
That mountain climbing, which doth spirits heal, 20  
And through the lack-life world in my descent,  
Things have been told me ’gainst my future weal  
Of sound ungrateful, though against the blows  
Of fortune I foursquare enow may feel.  
This therefore to my wish would give repose,                  25  
If thou my fortunes toldest, that draw near,  
For feebler falls the shaft a man foreknows.”  
So spake I to that very light, which here  
Had spoken to me first, and in the way  
That Beatris willed, I made my wishes clear.                  30  
And by no coils of words (which in their day  
Ensnared the foolish nations, ere was slain  
That Lamb of God, who taketh sins away ;)

But with our native diction, terse and plain,  
With his own smile envelopt and displayed,      35  
This love parental answered me again.  
“Contingency, whose tenor doth pervade  
That world alone, the object of your sense,  
Lies all before th’ Eternal Mind portrayed.  
Yet no necessity derives it hence,      40  
More than on barks, that down some river fleet,  
The eye, that mirrors them, gains influence.  
Therefrom, as wins upon our ear a sweet  
Effect from instruments harmonious,  
So steals thy future life on my conceit.      45  
As out from Athens went Hippolytus,  
(For so his false and bitter stepdame wrought,)  
Beyond thy Florence must thou wander thus.  
This thing is willed, this thing’s already sought,  
This thing its plotter soon will compass there      50  
Where Christ is, late and early, sold and bought —  
The injured side the ill report shall bear  
By course of custom, but the avenging wo  
That Truth, which her dispensemeth, shall declare.

Thou shalt leave all things, which thou long ago      55  
Hast loved most dearly, and I've herein said  
What dart is soonest shot from exile's bow.  
Thou shalt experience, how another's bread  
Is salt upon our palate, and what bale  
'Tis up and down another's stairs to tread.      60  
But that, which most will make thy shoulders ail,  
Will be the ribald, the malevolent horde,  
With whom thou shalt descend in yonder dale,  
Who all quite thankless, brainless, godless, tow'rd  
Thee will display themselves, yet shortly thou,      65  
Not they, will carry off their temples gored.  
Their brutish folly shall th' event display,  
So far, that lustre hereby mayst thou win,  
That thou a party by thyself dost stay.  
Thy first asylum, and thy first fair Inn      70  
Shall be the bounties of yon Lombard great,  
Whose crest's the ladder, and God's bird therein.  
Whose favors on thee shall so largely wait,  
That of two things, to grant and to request,  
Shall that be earliest, which is elsewhere late.      75

With whom thou shalt see him, that was imprest  
 So well, at birth-hour, by this planet bold,  
 That great achievements will his worth attest ;  
 Whom yet the world in due account to hold  
 Is not accustomed, seeing that for nine                           80  
 Years only have these orbs about him rolled.  
 But ere the Gascon's fraud shall undermine  
 Great Henry, sparkles of his virtues will  
 Spring out, in spurning toils, and riches' shine.  
 The fame of his magnificence shall fill                           85  
 So wide the country, that his very foes  
 Shall not have power their tongues thereon to still.  
 On him do thou, and on his grace repose,  
 By him will many persons change their place,  
 And poor will these become, and lordly those.               90  
 This record of him in thy memory trace,  
 Yet publish not ;" and herewith told he me  
 Things past believing by this present race.  
 "These are the glosses, O my son," said he,  
 " Of that which thou hast heard ; behind a few           95  
 Sun's periods are those nets prepared for thee —

I would not have thee thence thy neighbors view  
With envy, for thy lifetime hath to last  
Much more, than till their perfidies they rue."

This word the blessed Spirit made his last, 100

Appearing of the warp to make an end,  
Which in the loom, that I had laid, he cast.  
And I, like one who longeth to command  
His doubts to whom he knoweth to be wise,  
And honorably-minded, and his friend, 105  
Began, "I see, dear father, how time hies  
To meet me, for an onslaught, which may quell  
Him best, who least on the defensive lies.

With foresight therefore I must arm me well,  
Lest, while I lose my dearest home of all, 110  
My rhymes prohibit me to elsewhere dwell.  
In the world under of perpetual gall,

And on the mountain, where my lovely queen  
Her beams upraised me from yon earthly ball,  
And afterwards, from star to star-home sheen 115

In heaven, of diverse things have I been told  
That must for many taste of wormwood keen.

And if by truth I timorous hold,  
 I fear to lose my repute in the days,  
 To which our own shall be the days of old."      120  
 The light, from which my treasure laughed his rays,  
 (Whom here I found), more brightly 'gan to beam,  
 Like the gold mirror in the sun's full blaze,  
 And answered, " Unto consciences, which teem  
 With apprehensions for their own good fame,      125  
 Or other men's, thy word may churlish seem.  
 But nathless, putting from thee all bad shame,  
 Make thou thy Vision wholly manifest,  
 And let them wince, that galled are by the same.  
 For if thy voice their palate shall molest      130  
 At first, yet vital nourishment their mind  
 Shall afterwards derive, when they digest.  
 Thy proclamation shall be like the wind,  
 By which the tops most lofty most are blown,  
 But herein matter of much praise wilt find.      135  
 And therefore only spirits famed and known,  
 Both in these roundures, and the dolorous glade,  
 And in the mountain, have to thee been shown,

Because the reader's mind will not be stayed,

Nor in faith planted by examples ta'en  
From subjects mean, or rooted in the shade,  
Nor by no topic, which is else than plain."

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## CANTO XVIII.

Now was alone enjoying his heart's word  
That blessed Spirit, and on mine I fed,  
Softening the bitter by the sweet things heard.  
And the bright Lady, who to God me led,  
“Turn to thoughts better, think how I am near 5  
To Him, who lighteneth every wrong,” she said.  
Soon at the loving sound of mine heart's cheer  
I turned me, and how much of love I met  
I th' eyes of holiness, I write not here,  
Not dreading only, on my style to set 10  
Too great a burthen, but that Memory may  
Thus high return not, but if grace she get.  
So much about that moment I can say,  
That, whilst I gazed upon her, all save this  
Desire had mine affections ceased to sway, 15

Whilst the delight eterne, from Beatris  
Her glorious aspect full upon me thrown,  
At our looks newly meeting, gave me bliss.  
Afresh her dazzling smile upon me shone,  
And "turn," she said, "and hark ; 't is not within 20  
Mine eyes that Paradise is found alone."  
As aspect oft, in creatures of our kin,  
Displays the feeling, should it force acquire  
So great, that all our soul is rapt therein,  
Thus in the flaring of that sacred fire 25  
Whom turning I encountered, I could see  
That more to teach me was his heart's desire.  
"In this fifth landing here," bespoke he me,  
"Of this our downwards-nourisht, and our never-  
Leaf-dropping, but perpetual-fruitful tree, 30  
Are blessed spirits dwelling, which, or ever  
They clombe to heaven, had won them wide spread  
fame,  
Ennobling for all Muses to endeavor.  
Watch then the Cross'es arms, and when I name  
A spirit, whomsoe'er, thou 'lt see him do 35  
The like, as doth in cloud the rapides flame."

Then saw I one, whom through the Cross he drew  
 By naming Joshua, and at once the word  
 I noted, and the deed before my view.  
 So next the Maccabee's high sound I heard,      40  
 And saw a splendor, that revolved and ran,  
 Whose whirling cone the lash of transport stirred.  
 So too for Roland and for Charlemagne  
 Two lights my earnest gaze pursued, as far  
 As fowler's eye the new-flown hawk may scan.      45  
 William of Orange then, and *Rénouard*,  
 And *Godfrey de Bouillon* my looks along  
 The cross attracted, and *Robert Guiscard*.  
 Then, moved and mingled in the general throng,  
 The light, who spoke to me before, displayed      50  
 His rank i' th' artists of celestial song.  
 I turned me to my right hand, and I laid  
 My looks on Beatris, my duty deeming  
 That I should learn, by signs or words conveyed.  
 I saw so blithe and golden of their beaming      55  
 Her eyes, that therewith she surpast outright  
 Her latest, much more every former seeming.

And as by doing well with more delight  
Day after day, a man becomes aware  
His virtue waxeth toward her perfect height,       60  
So I perceived, that my revolving there  
With heaven a larger arc began to trace,  
Finding that marvel of God's hand more fair.  
And as the change, that cometh in the space  
Of moments over lily damsels, when       65  
They drop the load of blushing from their face,  
So, when I turned me, rose upon my ken  
The whiteness, and the cooler tempered shine,  
Of the sixth planet, which received us then.  
I saw the sparklings of the love divine,       70  
That overspread this beacon light of Jove,  
Before mine eyes our language to design.  
And as the birds, uprising from the cove,  
As making merry, where they pastured well,  
Now round, now oval in their squadron move,       75  
So sang and flew things hallowed in the shell  
Of each his brightness, and in order made  
By their positions D and I and L.

Their melodies first singing out they strayed,  
 Then as they formed one letter of the three,       80  
**A**while in silence and unmoved they stayed.  
**O** thou Parnassian Queen, that gloriously  
 Dost minds exalt, and with long ages dower,  
**A**s they do cities, but and realms, by thee,  
 Irradiate me, that as my mind this hour       85  
 Retains their patterns, I may carve them yet ;  
 Put in these narrow verses forth thy power.  
 The consonants and vowels then that met  
**M**y view were five and thirty, and as fast  
 I noted each, as 't was before me set.       90  
**DILIGITE JUSTITIAM** \* first came past,  
 A noun and verb of all the sentence told,  
**QUI JUDICATIS TERRAM** † followed last ;  
 Then in the **M** of that last word enrolled  
 They halted, making Jupiter to seem       95  
 A disc of silver interwrought with gold.

\* Love Justice.

† Ye that are Judges of the Earth.

I saw then other lights descending stream

Where pointed was the M, and rest there, singing  
Of the good Lord, who moved them, as I deem.

And as innumerable sparks the flinging 100

Of burning brands produces, oft to those  
Whose minds are shallow, fancied omens bringing,  
I saw above a thousand lights, which rose

In consort, and moved outward less and more,  
As bade the Sun, whence each enkindled glows. 105  
And after each was stationed, and forbore

To move, the likeness of an Eagle's head  
And neck methought that fire pictorial bore.

The Artist there is by no copies led—

All art He guideth, and by Him imprest 110  
Is Nature's cunning, where the fowls are bred.

Next the remaining numbers of the Blest,

Who made their lily pastures in the M,  
Scarce moving, joined the pattern with the rest.  
Star of delight! how many a lovely gem 115

Showed in thee, Justice hath its origins  
Amongst us in the Sphere thou dost begem.

And hence on yonder Sun, with whom begins  
 Thy power and motion, to look down I call  
 Upon the smoke, which thy fair light bedims,      120  
 That once more may His indignation fall  
 On those, who in that Temple sell and buy,  
 Which miracles and martyrdoms enwall.  
 Entreat, O Camp of Heaven, to whom I cry,  
 Entreat for all those upon Earth, who run      125  
 Behind exampled Wickedness awry.  
 It was by swords the work of War was done,  
 But now 't is by withholding, left and right,  
 That Bread the pitying Father shuts from none.  
 But thou, that only to annull dost write,      130  
 Beware, since Paul and Peter live, who bled  
 For the same vine, which thou despoil'st outright.  
 Ha ! thou wilt answer, I've so riveted  
 My love on him, who chose to dwell alone,  
 And for a dancer's flings to Death was led\*,      135  
 That nor the Fisherman, nor Paul, I've known.

See "Inferno, 80. 74.

## CANTO XIX.

BEFORE me now appeared with wings outspread  
That goodly symbol, which in sweet delight  
Beatified the souls engarlanded;  
Each one appeared a ruby, that so bright  
Was kindled by the sun's incursive ray, 5  
That back it glinted him upon my sight.  
And that, which it behoves me now to say,  
Was never aired on voice, nor inkt on sheet,  
Nor hath man's fancy entered ere this day.  
For I beheld, I heard, that beak repeat, 10  
And frame articulately, I and My,  
Where We and Our, as I conceived, were meet.  
"For being just," it said, "and pious I  
Am dwelling here exalted in such glory,  
As with itself forbids desire to vie. 15

And my renown shall not be transitory  
On Earth, although the Nations lewdly bent  
Applaud, and take not pattern by the story.”  
As out of many flames one heat is sent,  
So did I from that emblem hear to peal                  20  
One voice of many a loving ardor blent.  
“ O flowers unwithering of perpetual weal,”  
Thus I began soon after, “ who as one  
Do make me all your balmy odours feel,  
Cause by your breathing that I may have done                  25  
With that great fast, which long hath made me pine,  
Since food on earth I have yet found it none.  
Well know I, that if Righteousness divine  
Her mirror maketh of one realm in heaven,  
Then yours beholds her not with filmier eyne.                  30  
You know, with what attention I am given  
To listening, you do understand the doubt,  
That with my thirst for knowledge long hath striven.”  
As from his hood the falcon cometh out  
With brandisht head and self-applauding wings, 35  
Mustering his beauties, and his courage stout,

So saw I move that emblem, which from strings

    Of God his praise is woven, with such sound  
As he but knows whom God to joy there brings.

Then spake it, "He who turned the compass round

    This universe, and of such numberless                  41

Things manifest and secret set the bound,

Could not upon the World his might impress

    So fully, that his Word should all beside

Not overweigh with infinite excess.                  45

This makes it certain, that the Son of Pride,

    Who of created Beings had no peers,

Fell soon, because for light he would not bide.

And every smaller Nature hence appears

    To be a scant receiver of that Good,                  50

Boundless, whereof none else are measurers.

Our Insights therefore, since perforce they could

    Be nought except some glintings of the Mind,

By which all things existent are embued,

Could by their Natures not be so divined,                  55

    That their Beginner to be far more great

Than that which he appears, they should not find:

The Intuitions, therefore, which your state  
 Receives of Justice her perpetual reign,  
 Serve but as eyes, the sea to penetrate. 60  
 For though to scan its bottom you attain  
 Off shore, far out you cannot ; still 'tis there,  
 Though hindered by pure depth from being plain.  
 Ye have no light, unless from that sky fair  
 Which cannot be o'ercast ; all else is shade, 65  
 Or carnal vapors, which infections bear.  
 Enough is now that cavern open laid,  
 Which living Justice from thy view did sever,  
 Whereof such daily question thou hast made,  
 In saying, ' Such a one by Ganges-river 70  
 Is born, and there of Christ doth no man read,  
 Nor write, nor shall His name be mentioned ever.  
 And his good works and efforts shall be freed,  
 As far as human Judgement can perceive,  
 From sinfulness in both discourse and deed. 75  
 If faithless, unbaptized, the world he leave,  
 Where is the Justice, that condemns the man?  
 Where is the fault, if he doth not believe ?

And who art thou, that sitt'st, and mak'st a plan  
Of Judgement for a thousand miles asunder,        80  
Thy prospect being limited in a span?  
In very faith, if Scripture kept not under  
Your logic, he that now with me chicanes  
Might find a cause for doubt, that merits wonder!  
O animals terrestrial! O dull brains!        85  
The First Will, by itself all perfect, quits  
That Self at no time, which all Weal contains.  
So much is Justice as thereunto fits;  
In Creatures is no good, towards which it hies,  
But all such Good it causes and emits.' "        90  
This ended, as the stork in circles flies  
Above that nest, wherein she feeds her young,  
And as those fed attend her with their eyes,  
So moved, (and so mine eyes upon him clung,)  
That figure blest, whose movement of each plume  
Was on such numbers of free counsels hung.        95  
Circling he chaunted, "As to thee, by whom  
They are not understood, my notes be, so  
To mortals is God's everlasting doom."

Then went on one and every flaming glow                    100  
     Of God's own Spirit, in that sign enmailed,  
 Which made to Roman arms the World bend low.  
 "This kingdom," he began, "was never scaled  
     By mortal, that had not believed in Christ,  
 Before, or after, he on Cross was nailed.                105  
 But look, there's many calleth Christ, O Christ,  
     That shall for meeting Him in judgement want  
 Much more, than such a one as knew not Christ.  
 The Æthiop shall judge, and cry, Avaunt  
     Such Christians, when those congregations two 110  
 Part, one for Wealth eterne, and one for Want.  
 What shall your Kings be thought of by the Hindoo,  
     When by that opened volume he is placed,  
 Which bringeth all their obloquys to view ?  
 There 'mid the acts of Albert shall be traced        115  
     One, that will soon the Angel's pen employ,  
 And whence the realm of Praag shall be laid waste.  
 There shall be seen the grief, that by the alloy,  
     Mixed with his coin, along the Seine will breed  
 He, whom the swinish onset will destroy.                120

There shall be seen the pride, that worketh greed,  
 By which so mad are Scots and English grown,  
 That neither with their bounds can rest agreed.

There shall the silken and lewd life be shown  
 Of Spain's king, and Bohemia's, as of them 125

That virtue never yet have willed or known.

There shall the lame king of Jerusalem  
 His virtue with an I\* be summed up clear,  
 And th' other side of his account with M.\*

The avarice and poltroonery shall appear 130

Of him, who guardeth yonder fire-prop't isle,  
 At which Anchises closed his long career ;  
 And that his meanness may in plainer style

Be shown, his record is in Shorthand framed,  
 That much will in but little space compile. 135

His Brother and his Uncle shall be shamed  
 There for that folly, which the nation great,  
 And the two diadems hath foully maimed.

There shall men learn, both Norway's king to rate

And Portugal's, and him, who falsely set 140  
 The stamp of Venice, Rhætia's potentate.

\* Numerals.

O blessed Hungary, if none more she let  
Misguide her, blest the frontier land of Spain,  
If she could with her mountain shield her yet!  
And for an earnest hereof may be ta'en,                   145  
That Famagost already and Nicosie \*  
Lament, and grudge against their Beast his reign,  
For nought from others' footsteps parteth he."

\* In Cyprus.

## CANTO XX.

WHEN he, that all illumines with his ray,  
Beyond the boundary of our hemisphere  
Sinks, and from all parts daylight ebbs away,  
The heavens, that with him only glowed whilere,  
By many a light, in which but shines one flame, 5  
All unawares are made to reappear.  
Into my thoughts this heavenly aspect came,  
When silent in the blessed beak that sign  
Of the world and her potentates became.  
For all those living lights began to shine 10  
Far brighter, and sang hymns, that fade and fleet  
From my remembrance. O thou Love divine,  
Who mak'st a mantle of thy smiling sweet,  
How warm thou glowd'st in every fiery spring,  
Whose flaming did but hallowed thoughts repeat. 15

Now when the gems, that made the enjewelling  
 Of the sixth planet, lustrous, well esteemed,  
 Had stinted from their angels carolling,  
 I heard a murmuring, as a brook, that seemed  
 By cliff and cliff with sparkling wave to drop, 20  
 From summits gleby, as might well be deemed.  
 Then, as the sound upon the cittern's top  
 Takes modulation, as the wind, that flows  
 Through a flute, is tempered by the fingered stop,  
 So, (shunning all e lays to interpose,) 25  
 That Eagles murmuring up along his throat,  
 As though it had been hollowed out, arose.  
 Thence it began to grow a voice, and float  
 Within the beak, and there such words it made,  
 As my heart waited, wherein them I wrote. 30  
 “The part which sees, and which without a shade  
 In mortal eagles bears the Sun,” said he,  
 “Let now that part of mine be well surveyed.  
 For of the fires, that make this form in me,  
 Those, whence the eye is radiant in my head, 35  
 Are all the most exalted in degree.

He in the midmost, serving in the stead  
 Of pupil, was the Spirit's Menestrell,  
 By whom the Ark from town to town was led.  
 Now knoweth he, how far his Song was well      40  
 Deserving, as by purpose free controlled,  
 For therewith doth his recompense excell.  
 Among those five, who for mine eyelid hold  
 Their places round it, he is next my beak,  
 Who the poor widow for the Son consoled.\*      45  
 Now knoweth he, how much they lose, who seek  
 Not their Redeemer, by the experience  
 Of blessed life, and of the baleful eke.  
 The next, continuing that circumference  
 Of which I speak, along the ascending curve,      50  
 Delayed his death hour by true penitence.†  
 Now knoweth he, God's judgements do not swerve  
 Out of their course eterne, though worthy prayer  
 To day's part for to morrow may reserve.  
 The next, by yielding to the Papal Chair      55  
 With good intention, that to harm reverted,  
 Grew Greek, and me and Law transplanted there.

\* Purg. 6. 10.

† Isaiah, c. 38.

Now knoweth he, that goodness is exerted  
 Against herself no whit, though fruits derive,  
 Which have the welfare of the world subverted. 60

Next, as the arc descendeth, we arrive  
 At William, who is mourned for in the land,  
 That mourneth Charles and Frederic as alive.  
 Now knoweth he, how righteous kings are scanned  
 With love by heaven, and this too by the sight 65  
 Of his resplendence others understand.  
 Is there in your much-erring world a wight,  
 That could the Trojan Ripheus in this round  
 Imagine, making our fifth hallowed light? 69

Now knows he, more than hath on earth been found  
 Respecting grace divine, though not comprising  
 In range of eye-sight yet its farthest bound."  
 As when the lark, aloft in wide air rising,  
 Sings first, and after pauses, fain to rest  
 On the last warbled sweetness all-suffising,  
 Such now this figure to me seemed, imprest  
 By that supernal Will, from whose decree  
 All things are in their native substance drest.

Therewith my doubt, although transpicuous he  
Were in me, as through glass its mantling hue, 80  
To pause in silence no whit suffered me,  
But forced the words "What are these tidings" through  
My lips, for on them he so strongly weighed ;  
Then out the flashes of a great rapture flew.  
Anon, with eye more brightly kindled, made 85  
That blessed form his answer, lest I should  
In marvelling suspense have longer stayed.  
"I see, thou holdest my reports for good  
As mine, but seest not how they can be so ;  
Whence, if believed, they are not understood. 90  
Thy case is that of those, who something know  
By appellation, but that have no sense  
Of what its being is, till others show.  
The heavenly kingdom suffers violence  
By ardent love, and by abounding hope, 95  
Conquering the purpose of Omnipotence;  
Not as men conquer, when with men they cope,  
But to be conquered because He is prone,  
And, conquered, conquers for his bounty's scope.

The first and fifth life in the eyelid shown 100

Make thee to wonder, that thou shouldst have seen  
Emblazoned by them the angelic zone.

They left their bodies, not as thou dost ween  
In heathendom, but Christians, firm in trust  
I' th' feet, or to be cleft, or having been. 105

For One from Hell, in which to counsels just  
Is no returning, came back, (to reward  
Abounding hope,) where lay his bones in dust.  
Abounding hope had put forth to the Lord  
Her strength in prayer to raise him from the grave,  
To where the Will has room to be restored. 111

The glorious Spirit, which our topic gave,  
Restored to flesh, in which he stayed not long,  
Believed in One, that power had him to save,  
And burned, believing, in a fire so strong 115

Of soothfast love, that when death next befell,  
He was found worthy of this festive throng.  
The other Soul, by grace, that from a well  
So deep goes out, that never creature yet  
Could to the earliest wave his sight propel, 120

In earth his love on justice wholly set;  
So God from grace to grace unsealed his eye,  
To know the ransom of our mortal debt;  
To whom he clove, and thenceforth to comply  
With rotten paganism no longer bore, 125  
But chode for it the nations led awry.  
Those ladies three, whom thou beheld'st before  
At the right wheel, were his baptizers, yea,  
Ere baptism was a thousand years and more.  
Predestination, O how far away 130  
Are thy outgoings from what they suspect,  
Who the first cause not all in all survey!  
And do you mortals not too much affect  
To judge, for even we, that God behold,  
Know not yet all the number of the elect. 135  
And dear we do this limitation hold,  
For this advantage doth our weal refine,  
That God doth in his will our wills enfold.”  
Thus was administered that medicine  
Balmy, which man for shorter sight requires, 140  
To me by that similitude divine.

And as some harpist good the swimming wires  
Doth to accompany the good singer teach,  
By which the minstrelsy more charm acquires,  
So I remember, that throughout his speech

145

I witnessed those two spirits hallowèd,  
As when our eyes are moving one and each,  
To move their flamelets, as the words were said.

## CANTO XXI.

Now were my eyes reanchored on the face,  
(And my heart likewise,) of my own ladye,  
And all concernments else had yielded place.  
This time she was not smiling, “but,” said she,  
“Were I to smile, perforce thou wouldest fare      5  
Like, when she sank in ashes, Semelè ;  
Because my beauty, which doth everywhere,  
As thou perceivest, gather brighter glow,  
Ascending up the eternal palace-stair,  
If it were not attempered, blazeth so,      10  
That its effulgence thy terrestrial power,  
As lightning splinters branches, would o'erthrow.  
Now are we lifted to the seventh bright bower,  
Which from below the Lion's ardent breast  
Doth mitigated influences shower.      15

Now let thine eyes be with thy mind address,  
And in these mirror that similitude,  
Which in this mirror will be manifest."  
If one but knew the sweetness of the food  
That blessed aspect ministered my sight, 20  
(Toward a new object when I turned), he could,  
How dear I counted this, have told aright,  
(My own celestial guardian to obey,)  
By measuring one against the next delight.  
In that crystalline orb, which working way 25  
Around our globe, is titled from its dear  
Liege, who all malice quelled with his mild sway,  
Colored as gold, on which a ray shall peer,  
I saw a ladder raised erect on end,  
So high, that of my sight it past the sphere. 30  
Adown the steps whereof I saw descend  
So many lights, I fancied every lamp,  
Which shows itself in heaven, must therewith wend.  
And as by instincts natural a camp  
Of choughs, as day's approaches they discern, 35  
Bestir themselves to warm their pinions damp;

Then some fly off, and never more return,

And some repair again to whence they flew,  
And others wheeling up and down sojourn,

So seemed the fiery clusters now to do, 40

That blended had come down ; so to divide,  
As soon as past a certain grade they flew.

And he, who stayed the nearest at our side,

So brightened, that in thought I made avow,  
“ The love thou show’st me I have well descried ; 45  
But she from whom I wait the Where and How

Of speech and silence, yet is mute ; thus I  
Do well against my wish to ask not now.”

But she, who scrutinized my silence by

The sight of Him, by whom all things are seen, 50  
Bade me, “ Thy ardent wishes satisfy.”

Then I began, “ My worth is all too mean

Thy answer to deserve, but for the sake  
Of her, by whom to ask hath granted been,  
O blessed soul, that of thy joy dost make 55

Thy covering, let me know the reason, whence  
Thou dost so near to me thy station take.

And tell me, why at this circumference  
 Are mute the sweet accords of Paradise,  
 Which so devout down elsewhere greet our sense." 60  
 "Thou hast thy ears like-mortal as thine eyes,"  
 He answered, "and the cause, we do not sing,  
 Is that, why Beatris her smile denies.  
 Adown the holy stairs for this one thing 64  
 I came, that with glad cheer I mought thee greet  
 By words and by my Light engarmenting.  
 Nor was I prompted by my love's more heat,  
 For like love burneth, and in overplus,  
 Mid these, as by their flamings you can mete.  
 But that majestic Love, who maketh us 70  
 The Serfs of counsels, which o'er all things reign,  
 As thou observest here, decrees it thus."  
 "O sacred Lamp," I answered, "I see plain,  
 How through this hierarchy love's free will  
 Can th' everlasting polity maintain. 75  
 But this it is, that hard remaineth still,  
 Why out of all thy colleagues thou alone  
 Wast chosen forth, this function to fulfill."

When scarce the last word I had reached, that cone  
    Of splendor made its axis like a pin,                                 80  
To whirl around on, like a swift millstone.  
Then answered me the love, that dwelt therein,  
    "There's light divine, that over me descends,  
Through-piercing this, which I am wombed within,  
Whose operation with my vision blends,                                 85  
    And lifts me o'er myself, till I discern  
That all-first Being, who adown it sends.  
Thereof derives the joyance, whence I burn,  
    For like my vision, be 't more clear or less,  
Do I the clearness of my blaze return.                                 90  
But not the soul, that hath most large access  
    Of light in heaven, not seraphs that most keep  
Their eyes on God fast, can thy doubts profess  
To satisfy, sithence they dive so deep  
    In God's abysmal counsel, that their clew                         95  
Is shut, where no created eyes may peep.  
And when the mortal world thou meet'st anew,  
    Bring back this word, and let them not presume  
Henceforth again such quarries to pursue.

On earth the minds, that here are lustrous, fume ; 100

Think now thyself, if they can there below  
Do what they fail of, although Heaven illume."

This language on his part restrained me so

That I gave up the question, and but prayed  
Him humbly, what man he had been, to show. 105

"Betwixt the two Italian shores," thus made

He answer, "and not far from thy abode,  
Are rocks at height where sounds of thunders fade ;  
They form a ridge, on which the name bestowed

Is Catria ; under these a hermitage 110  
Is consecrated, to lone worship owed."

Thus did he thirdly in discourse engage,

And afterwards went on, "Here did I give  
Myself so firmly to God's vassalage,  
That but with juice of Olives I could live 115

Seasoning my food, through frost or drouth on field,  
Contented with my thoughts contemplative.

Once to these heavens did that cloister yield

Right largely, and 't is now grown barren land—  
So much so, it must shortly be revealed, 120

Here lived I Petrus Damianus, and  
 Petrus Peccator did the Household sway  
 Of Holy Mary on the Adrian strand.  
 Short time in mortal life had I to stay,  
 When to that Cardinal's hat I was both led      125  
 And thrust, (which but from bad to worse finds way.)  
 Ah ! Cephas hath gone poor and barefooted,  
 And the great Vessel, that the Spirit shrined,  
 Asking at doors however mean their bread ;  
 While now your modern prelates must be lined      130  
 Each side with servitors, and drawn before,  
 (So heavy are they), and upborne behind.  
 Their palfreys with their robes are covered o'er ;  
 Thus for two beasts a single hide they frame !  
 O patience, that endurest evermore !”      135  
 As thus he spoke, beheld I many a flame  
 Adown the ladder's steps who whirled and past,  
 And goodlier each at every whirl became.  
 About the first they marshalled and stood fast,  
 And raised a shout of such enormous sound      140  
 That all comparisons I find surpast,  
 Nor heard I words ; such din my hearing drowned.

## CANTO XXII.

OPPREST with consternation to my guide  
I turned myself, as little children run  
Always to her, in whom they most confide;  
And she, as mother rescueth her son  
Breathless and pale—with voice, by which his heart  
To dispositions good is always won, 6  
Said to me, “Know’st not, that in heaven thou art,  
And know’st thou not, that from good zeal is all  
Done here, and heaven is hallowed every part?  
How would their song have changed thee, and withall  
My smiling, of thyself thou mayst suppose, 11  
When thou art moved so deeply by their call;  
In which hadst thou discerned what prayer arose,  
Thou wouldest a vengeance know, that shall appear  
Before thy eyes—or ever Death them close. 15

In haste the sword smites not, that is drawn here,

Nor lingers, but as men esteem delay,

Who look for it with hope, or else with fear.

But now 'tis time, thou turn a different way,

For spirits thou wilt see of highest praise,      20

If thou remove thy aspect, as I say."

Then I directed, as she bade, my gaze,

And saw above a hundred balls, that grew

More glorious under their commutual rays.

I stood as one, that striveth to subdue      25

The stings of his desire, and doth not dare

To ask—so sore he fears too much to do.

Anon the largest, and most lustrous-fair

Among these pearls, came out before the rest,

To satisfy my wishes for his share,      30

And, "if," said he, "the love were manifest,

That burneth here, to thee, as 'tis to me,

Thy thoughts already would have been exprest;

But lest from thy great purpose thou shouldst be

Kept back, wert thou to wait, I will reply      35

To but the thought, that scruple causes thee.

That mountain, which Cassino standeth by,  
 Aforetime held upon its top the haunts  
 Of the malignant pagans led awry;  
 And I the first was thereon to advance      40  
     The name of Him, who down to earth-ward led  
 That Truth, that doth our weal so much enhance;  
 And on me so much light of grace was shed,  
     That I withdrew the neighboring villages  
 From the bad worship, which the world misled.      45  
 All contemplative men were likewise these  
     Fires, that are with me, kindled by that heat,  
 Which nurseth flowers and fruits of sanctities.  
 Here Romuald, and Maccarius here I meet,  
     Here all my brethren, who in cloister's shade      50  
 Their hearts have tethered, not alone their feet."

I answered, "The good will thou hast displayed  
     To me in speaking, and the benevolence  
 In all your cressets noted and surveyed,  
 As greatly have enlarged my confidence,      55  
     As doth the Sun the rose, when she as wide  
 Expands, as Nature gives her competence.

I therefore ask, and pray thou wilt decide,  
 Father, if I can have the grace divine,  
 Thy semblance to behold unqualified." 60

"O brother; this exalted wish of thine  
 Yon farthest sphere," he answered, "shall fulfill,  
 Wherein sufficed are all desires with mine.  
 There ripe, entire and perfect, every will  
 Is rendered; every part therein alone 65  
 Remains, as it hath been, for ever still;  
 For place it hath not, and revolves upon  
 No poles; our ladder thereto doth extend,  
 And hence thy sight is by it so outflown.  
 Thus far the patriarch Jacob saw it send 70

Its upper part, when he thereon saw meet  
 Such troops of angels; but to so ascend,  
 There's not a man, that lifteth now his feet  
 From earth, and verily, my Rule below  
 Is left for nought but soiling many a sheet. 75  
 The walls, that were a convent long ago,  
 Are caves of lewdness, and the cowls are what  
 But sacks that with corrupted flour o'erflow?

But heinous usury more affronteth not  
     The will of God, than that emolument                  80  
 That doth so deeply monkish hearts besot.  
 For whatsoe'er the Church may hold is lent  
     For only those, that ask it in God's name,  
 And not for nepotism, or worse intent.  
 So soft and dainty is the mortal frame,                  85  
     That from the planted oak till fruit you see  
 A good beginning makes not all the game.  
 Did not St. Peter, lacking gold and fee  
     Commence his convent, and with fast and prayer  
 I mine, and Francis with humility?                  90  
 And if thou glance at what the sources were  
     Of each, and then see how it hath flow'd on,  
 Thou wilt indeed see foul grown out of fair.  
 Yet backward in good faith has Jordan gone,                  94  
     And the sea's fleeing, when God willed, was more  
 Wondrous, than rescue here would seem anon."  
 He ceased, and midst his conclave as before  
     He mingled, and the conclave closer held  
 Together, and upward like a whirlwind bore.

My lady-love me after them impelled                            100  
     Up o'er that ladder, solely by her look ;  
     So much my Nature's checks her might dispelled.  
     And nought down here a movement ever took,  
         Where things by nature rise and fall, so fleet  
     As with my wing comparison could brook.                    105  
     O reader, by my hopes afresh to meet  
         That holy triumph, for whose sake I mourn  
         My sins full often, and my bosom beat,  
     Thou wouldest in fire less quick have placed and torn  
         Away thy finger, than I saw the sign                    110  
     Which follows Taurus, and was therein borne.  
     O noble stars, O light with power benign  
         Impregnated, to which I stand in debt  
         For all, whatever genius may be mine,  
     With you together rose, together set                            115  
         He, that of mortal life is parent sole,  
     When first the Tuscan airs my temples beat ;  
     And when to that high sphere, in which you roll,  
         The grace had been apportioned me to rise,  
     Your region was selected for my goal.                        120

'Tis now to you that with devoutest sighs  
 My soul doth for increase of power appeal  
 To cope with that dread pass to which she hies.

"Thou art so near the yondermost of weal,  
 That thou shouldst," Beatris began to say, 125  
 "Full clear and sharp thine eyes already feel.  
 So ere in it thou makest greater way,

Cast thy look downward, and how much of ground  
 I have laid underneath thy feet — survey,  
 So that with heart as blithe as can be found, 130

Thou mayst await the triumph-holding crew,  
 That comes exultant on this welkin round."

I lowered again my aspect all down through  
 Those seven spheres, and I beheld this ball  
 Such, that I smiled its paltriness to view, 135  
 And hold that counsel for the best of all,

Which vilipends it, and who turns elsewhere  
 His thoughts a true philosopher I call.

I saw Latona's daughter sparkling there  
 Without those shadows, whence I had begun 140  
 Before to deem, that she was dense and rare.

I bore the aspéct, Hyperion, of thy son  
Hence, and perceived, how near and round his face  
The joys of Maia and Dione run.  
The tempered shine of Jove there could I trace      145  
Betwixt his Son and Father, and the mode  
In which they toward each other change their place ;  
And all these seven planets to me showed  
How great their swiftness and circumference,  
And how far parted was of each the road.      150  
The area small, that makes our pride immense,  
In my revolving with the Twins eterne  
Appeared from estuaries to mountains ; thence  
Did to the glorious eyes my eyes return.

## CANTO XXIII.

As when the bird among the boughs beloved,  
Keeping beside her darlings' nest her seat,  
By night, when things are from the view removed,  
That sooner she the dear ones' looks may meet,  
And that by which she feeds them to purvey, 5  
Counting for them her anxious labor sweet,  
Forestalls the hours upon the unsheltered spray,  
And waits the sun with burning eagerness,  
Poring with fixed eye for the peep of day,  
So my heart's lady stood erect, no less 10  
Intent, and gazing firmly on the tract,  
By which the sun least hurried seems to press ;  
Whilst I, beholding her engrost and rapt,  
Became as one desirous to obtain,  
And solaced in but hoping what he lackt. 15

But 'twas not long between the moments twain,  
When I began to wait, and to behold  
The heavens of brightness more and more to gain.  
“Lo there,” said Beatris, “the ranks unfold  
Of Christ His triumph, there the fruit entire      20  
Is gathered-in, for which these orbs have rolled.”  
Methought, that all her aspect shone like fire,  
And so exulting did her eyes appear,  
That I to phrasing it no more aspire.  
As beameth in the full-mooned evenings clear      25  
Titanis forth among the eternall fays,  
By whom the heaven is patterned wide and near,  
Over thousands of lamps I saw thus blaze  
A sun, that made them all and each to flame,  
As ours to those high beacons gives their rays.      30  
And through that living light so keenly came,  
As I beheld, the substance glorified,  
That I to look upon it could not frame.  
O Beatris, my lief' st and sweetest guide !  
“That,” said she, “which o'ermastereth thy sight, 35  
Is force, against which nothing can abide.

Lo there the Wisdom, therein is the Might,  
 That opened (where such long desire and pine  
 Had been) the road from earth toward heavenly height." 40  
**As fire that cloud no longer may confine**  
 From its dilating, lanches forth, to fall  
 To earthward, swerving out of Nature's line,  
 So mid this high carouse, my soul went all  
 Abroad, enlarged beyond her native guise,  
 And cannot that which she became recall. 45  
**"Lift up, and look what I am like, thy eyes;**  
 Thou hast already looked on that, which thee  
 To bear my smile's effulgence qualifies."  
**As one, who feels his nightly phantasy**  
 Gone from him, and who vainly tasks his wit 50  
 If brought within remembrance it can be,  
 So was I, when this proffer came, the fit  
 Subject of gratitude, that ne'er shall fade  
 Out of the book, wherein the past is writ.  
 If all the tongues now sounded in my aid, 55  
 That Polyhymnia with her sisters yet  
 By their sweet bosoms' flow have supplest made,

They could not pay one thousandth of my debt  
To truth, in singing of the sacred smile,  
In what gold sheen the sacred face it set. 60

And thus perforce the sacred poem, while  
It sings of Paradise, like one whose road  
Is cumbered, foots it with unequal style.  
But whoso thinks upon the enormous load,  
And of the mortal shoulders which upbear, . 65

Must, when they stagger, think indulgence owed.  
No waters for a puny skiff to dare  
Are those, by which the bold prow hath to scour ;  
They suit no pilot that himself would spare.  
“ Why dost thou so in love my face devour, 70

And the fair garden dost not turn to view,  
Which by the rays of Christ himself doth flower ?  
There is the rose, within which human grew  
The Word of God ; there are those lilies, by  
Whose breathing men the blessed way first knew.” 75

Thus Beatris, and I, that to comply  
With her injunctions all alert had been,  
Renewed the battling of my feebler eye.

As by a sunbeam when it pierces clean  
 Athwart a broken cloud, a floral field 80

Mine eyes, in shadow covered, oft have seen,  
 So many troops of splendors were revealed,  
 All lightened from above with dazzlingest  
 Rays, and the lightning's origin concealed.

O power benign, who them so blazonest, 85

Thou didst uplift thyself, that I might reach  
 To where mine eyes before had sunk opprest.  
 The Name of that fair Flower, whom I beseech  
 Both late and early, all my soul impelled  
 To scan the largest fire ; and soon as each 90

Of my sight's avenues empictured held  
 That living star, lo, such-like and so great,  
 Who there excelleth as she here excelled,  
 I saw through heaven a meteor penetrate,  
 That, diadem-like, was in a circle bent, 95

And I saw this involve her and rotate.  
 All earthly music, that with ravishment  
 Of sweetness draweth most our soul's desire,  
 Would seem a crash of cloud by thunder rent,

If set against the sounding of the lyre, 100  
 Which garlands the fair sapphire, that doth seal  
 Its azure on the brightest heaven's gyre.  
 "I am the angelic Lover, and I wheel  
 Around the rapture of the glory, given  
 From off the form, whose inmate was our weal. 105  
 And I shall wheel, thou Liege-ladye of heaven,  
 While thou, attendant on thy Son, this sphere  
 Diviner makest, which thou 'rt fain to live in."  
 Thus the orbicular melody was here  
 Charactered, and those other splendors all 110  
 To Mary's name gave replication clear.  
 That covering of all covers, kingly pall  
 Of the Creation, which most lives and glows  
 In God's breath and his works and ways withall,  
 Beyond us with its inner margin rose 115  
 So far, that where I stood, it had begun  
 No sign of its appearance to disclose.  
 And therefore in my eyesight power was none  
 Of following where the flame engarlanded  
 Was lifted up, attendant on her Son. 120

But as we see the babe with arms outspread

After his nurse, when he hath drawn the breast,  
With passion throughout all his features shed,  
So stretching out aloft their spires comprest,

Beheld I all those ardors, furnace-white,      125  
Their love to Mary making manifest.

And so remained they postured in my sight,

Singing, "O Liege-ladye of Heaven," so sweet  
That out of me ne'er faded the delight.

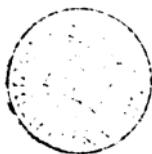
O what man the abundance can repeat,      130  
Which in those blessed garners is contained,

That here for sowing have been soils found meet?  
Here live they joyous on the treasure gained

By weeping, captive in the Babylon,  
Wherein the gold of each behind remained.      135

Here triumpheth beneath the exalted Son

Of God and Mary, with the Consistory  
Of old and new Saints, for his battle won,  
The keeper of the keys of all this glory.



## CANTO XXIV.

“O CHOSEN-OUT, partakers of the great  
Feast of that holy Lamb, by whom ye fare  
On that which aye doth all your wishes sate,  
If this man by the heavenly grace do share  
Some foretaste in the fragments of your bread, 5  
Or ever Death his timely hour prepare,  
Regard his warmth of zeal unlimited,  
And grant him some besprinkling; always you  
Quaff at that fountain, whence his thought is shed.”  
Thus Beatris; whereat the blest ones grew 10  
As spheres revolving on their axles fast,  
And flamed out vehemently, as comets do.  
As turn the wheels of watches, when you cast  
Your eyes upon them, in their due time so  
That quiet one appears, and spins the last, 15

These Words of the Creator's thus 'gan show  
 The difference of their wealth by each his own  
 Dance's variety, one quick, another slow.  
 And from the fairest ring I marked, anon  
 I saw come out a fire of so much bliss,                   20  
 That none therein was left, that brighter shone,  
 And thrice about the lady Beatris  
 It circled, with such heavenliness of song,  
 As fancy can repeat not, and for this  
 I spare to write it; my pen skips along,                   25  
 For our imagination, (nought to say  
 Of speech,) is color for such traits too strong.  
 "O Saint and Sister mine, who dost us pray  
 With such devoutness, by affection's heat  
 From yon fair globe thou loosenest me away."           30  
 The blessed flame, when he had made complete  
 His revolutions, toward my lady bent  
 His point, through which he spoke as I repeat;  
 And she, "O light eterne of the great Saint,  
 To whom our Master gave the keys he bore                   35  
 To earth of this our wondrous ravishment,

This man's proficience, as thou lik'st, explore

In hard or easy points, that Faith concern,  
By which thou walkedst on the seas of yore.

If love or hope or trust he rightly turn

40

Can from thee not be hidden, for 'tis seen  
There, where all beings' likenesses return.

But since this Kingdom's denizens have been

Acquired through Faith, whom honored they should  
make,

Her mention fitly here may intervene."

45

As a pupil standing mute, his arms may take,

Before his Master a topic shall propound,  
For handling, not for resolution's sake,  
So armed I me with every reason sound,

While yet she spoke, that I prepared might be 50  
For such a querist, and on such high ground.

"Show thyself, Christian man? I ask of thee,

What thing is Faith?" Hereat I raised my head  
To meet the Light, from whom this came to me,  
Then to my lady turned, who through me shed

55

Fresh courage by her looks, that from my own  
Interior fount I might the water spread.

"The grace of that first Captain, who to own  
 My trust hath granted me," began I then,  
 "Vouchsafe, my thoughts in fitting words be shown. 60  
 As we have learned, O father, by the pen  
 Of thy true brother, who the Romans brought  
 With thee into the ranks of trusting men,  
 Faith is the very substance of things wrought,  
 And of the things unseen an argument, 65  
 And herein stands her essence, to my thought."  
 "Thy tenets," then I heard, "with truth consent,  
 If, when he ranks it first with substances,  
 Then arguments, thou know well what is meant.  
 Thereat I answered, "Those high essences, 70  
 Which here to me unscarf themselves, of eyes  
 Beneath on earth so scape the accesses,  
 That in the bare belief their Being lies,  
 On which is built our lofty hope, and thus  
 Faith as a substance we characterize ; 75  
 And from that same belief we must discuss  
 Our doctrine, while we nothing more perceive ;  
 Hence takes it name of argument for us."

“ If all, that men do in the world receive  
 By way of doctrine, thus were understood,        80  
 No room for wit of sophist would it leave ; ”  
 This Fire of Love his breathing thus renewed,  
 And added afterwards, “ We fairly now  
 Have weight and carat of this coin reviewed.  
 But tell me, thereof in thy purse hast thou ? ”        85  
 “ I have it,” answered I, “ so bright and round,  
 “ That nought I stick, its mintage to avow.”  
 That which next issued from the light profound  
 There breathing was, “ And how didst thou obtain  
 This gem so costly, whereon rests the ground        90  
 Of all the Virtues ? ” “ That unstinted rain,”  
 I answered, “ of God’s Spirit, which is poured  
 O’er the new page and ancient, doth so plain  
 A syllogism, to prove me this, afford,  
 That every demonstration, to be told        95  
 Thereafter, would appear an edgeless sword.”  
 Then heard I, “ In the Statements new and old,  
 Which thou concludest from, what grounds are those  
 That make thee for God’s message them to hold ? ”

"The proofs," I answered, "whereon I repose, 100

Are the works done, for which yet Nature never  
Made iron hot, nor swung 'gainst anvil blows."

"And who assures thee," was rejoined, "that ever  
Such works have been? Who swears it for thee?

None

Save him to prove whose witness you endeavour." 105

"If without miracles the world was won,"

I answered, "to Christianity, be 't so;

They're all not worth a hundredth of this one.

For thou didst, poor and lacking nurture, go

Afield to plant that scion good, which some- 110  
Time was a vine, but now is turned a sloe."

When this I closed, the high Court's halidom

Resounded sphere-wide a "Thee God We Praise,"  
With harmony, such as might that heaven become.

And the great Peer, who deigned me thus to raise 115

From bough to bough in questions, and by whose  
Instructions now I neared the topmost sprays,

Afresh began, "Soliciting grace, that wooes

Thy mind, in bringing this much to an end,  
Thy mouth has opened right as I would choose. 120

And that which thence has issued I commend;

But now I ask, what is't thou dost believe,

And by what sanctions dost thou it defend?"

"O Sire and blessed Soul, who dost receive 124

That which thou trustedst in, when toward the grave  
Thou didst the younger feet behind thee leave,"

Thus I began to answer, " thou wouldest have

Me here the form of my quick faith unroll,

And that which for this faith th' occasion gave.

I answer, I believe in one God sole,

130

Eternal, and who moveth every heaven,

He moveless, by desire and love's control.

And to this faith not only am I driven

By grounds in nature and reflection too,

But by the truth, which raineth hence, 'tis given, 135

Through Moses, through the psalms and Prophets,

through

The Gospel, and by what from you I learn,

When nurselings of the Holy Ghost ye grew.

And I believe in Three Persons Eterne,

So single in their essence, and so trine, 140

That Are and Am have therewith like concern.

Regarding the great mystery divine

Of which I speak, full often sealed are my  
Convictions by the Gospel's discipline.

This is the original, the spark whereby

145

Is kindled afterwards a flame so clear,  
As burneth in me, like a star in sky."

As where his lord may from a servant hear

Glad words, and when he ceases, to his breast  
May clasp him, thankful for reports so dear,

Thus, ever while he sang, and while he blest,

Embraced me, from the moment that I ceased,  
That Apostolic light, by whose behest  
I spoke, so perfectly my words him pleased.

## CANTO XXV.

If ere 't is granted, that the sacred song,  
Whereunto heaven and earth their hand have laid,  
And haggard which has made me for years long,  
Shall foil the rancors, which from me blockade  
That pleasant fold, where as a lamb I lay, 5  
Hating the wolves, who thèreon war have made,  
With altered voice, with altered fleece that day  
As poet I'll return, and at the fount,  
Where I was christened, on my brow put bay,  
Because by Faith, which brings into account 10  
Our souls with God, I entered here, and through  
Such Faith St. Peter circled here my front.  
And toward us after this a splendour drew  
From out the band, whereof emerged the head  
Of those, whom Christ on earth left in his lieu. 15

And, full of blitheness, my heart's lady said

“Look, and O look ; see yonder the great peer,  
For whom beneath Gallice is visited.”

As when the dove by his companion dear

Alighteth from the wing, and each to each,      20  
Cooing and circling, maketh love appear,  
So to salute each other with glad speech

And cheer I saw these glorious princes great,  
Lauding the food, which there aloft they reach.

But after ceasing to congratulate,      25

Full still before me stood that fire and this,  
Radiant — mine eye bore not the splendor's weight.  
And beaming thereupon spake Beatris,

“O glorious heart, for thine it was to write  
Of our high Court the liberalities,      30  
By thee let Hope be resonant in this height,

Whose part thou knowest, it is thyself that plays,  
So oft as Jesus 'mid the Three grew bright.”

“Lift up (and take thou confidence) thy gaze,  
For all, that from the mortal coil translated      35  
Comes hither, needeth ripening in our rays.”

From the second fire this comfort emanated,  
Wherat I lifted up mine eyes to these  
Mountains, from which they erst had sunk amated.  
“Because by grace our Suzerain doth please,      40  
That thou, before thy death, come face to face  
In court most secret with his Comites,  
That having seen the truth of this high place,  
Thou shouldst in others and thyself add power  
To Hope, whence men below good zeal embrace,    45  
Say, what she is, and how she makes to flower  
Thy thoughts, and how she came to build by thee,”  
So spoke afresh that second light, “her bower.”  
And in my answer pity-loving she,  
Who my wings’ feathers such a height to soar    50  
Had guided, thus anticipated me ;  
“No Child hath God’s Church Militant with more  
Of Hope than he possesseth, as the Sun  
Recordeth, who this whole troop shineth o'er;  
And therefore out of Egypt hath he won      55  
The grace, to enter Salem for a scout  
Before his term of service be outrun.

Those other questions two, which not from doubt

Thou askest, but that he may well report,  
How dear to thee this virtue is throughout,

I leave him, as to whom they will not thwart,

Nor bragging need; which let him testify,  
And may the grace of God not fall him short."

As a pupil to the master may reply,

In theme well known, with quick and free content,  
That his proficience others may descry,

"Hope is that looking forward confident,"

Said I, "to future glory, that doth stream  
From grace, which is to previous merit lent.  
Such light doth many a star upon me beam,

But therewith did he first my heart infuse,  
Who was chief Minstrel of the Chief Supreme.

'Let there be Hope,' thus saith his lofty Muse,

God-praising, 'unto those who know thy Name,'  
And sure he knows it, whom my faith embues.

His droppings with the words thou droppest came

In thy epistle, whence I am replete,  
And shower upon my brethren of the same."

While yet I spoke, as vivid and as fleet  
As lightning flash, in midmost of that blaze 80  
I saw a pulse of keener splendor beat.  
Then breathed it out, "The ardent love, that stays  
Yet in me for the virtue, which hath stept  
My comrade to field fought, and granted bays,  
Bids me bespeak thee soft, that thou accept 85  
Her comfort, and I gladly would be told,  
What promise Hope before thine eyes hath kept?"  
I answered, "The new Scriptures and the old  
Lay down the port, by sight here to me known,  
For spirits with the friends of God enrolled. 90  
Isaiah saith, that each amidst her own  
Country shall be arrayed with double vest,  
And by their country this sweet life is shown.  
Thy brother too more largely hath exprest  
This revelation by the things averred 95  
As touching those that in white robe are drest."  
And after and before my closing word  
A "let them hope in Thee" which every choir  
Made answer to, from overhead was heard.

And from among them parted then a fire, 100  
Might make a winter's month a single day,  
If Cancer such a diamond should acquire.  
As blithe a virgin rises, moves away,  
And joins the dance, that honor she may do  
The bride, (her thoughts to evil do not stray,) 105  
That segregated brightness toward the Two  
Came up, while in their circle round and round,  
Rapid as it fits their ardent love, they flew.  
It mingled in their measure and their sound,  
And Beatris her looks upon them stayed, 110  
Bride-like, in stillness, rooted to the ground.  
“Behold, whose head was on the bosom laid  
Of our blood-giving Pelican, who bore  
The sacred charge from on the Cross conveyed.”  
Thus my liege-lady spake, yet nothing more 115  
Removed the attentive earnest of her eyes,  
After these words were ended than before.  
And as it goes with one, who peers and tries  
To see the Sun’s eclipse a little space,  
From whom his sight by too much seeing flies, 120

So found I with that second fire my case,

" And wherefore dazzlest thou thyself to see,"

Thus heard I said, " that which has here no place ?

Dust is with dust my body, and shall be

Such, till the number in these hosts of ours 125

Is equalled with Eternal God's decree.

With double vesture in the blissful bowers

Are but the lights of Two, that have ascended,

And this report thou in that world of yours."

And at these words the fiery circling ended, 130

And ceased as suddenly the dulcet mood,

That from the Trio's voices had come blended.

As when, fatigue or peril to preclude,

The oars, that whilom on the waters beat,

Cease at the signal's breath, so stilled they stood. 135

Ah but in what a coil my thoughts were set,

When, turning round to look for Beatris,

I could not see her, though I certes yet

Was by her close, and in the realm of bliss !

## CANTO XXVI.

WHILE yet for loss of eyes perplexed I stayed,  
There came a breathing from the fulgent flame  
That blinded them, which my attention swayed.  
He said, "Until thy vision, which became  
Exhausted on me, be afresh supplied, 5  
Thou shouldst with reasoning compensate the same.  
Begin then, tell me, whereon doth abide  
Thy heart, and earn a claim, on which to stand,  
That sight may be withheld thee, not denied;  
Because the lady, through this Angel's land 10  
Who guides thee, she hath in her looks the skill  
Dwelling, which Ananias had in his hand."  
I said, "Or late, or soon, at her sweet will,  
Come healing to those eyes, through which she went  
As portals with the flames, that fire me still, 15

The Good, that maketh all this Court content,  
Of what Love readeth me, in tone or light  
Or loud, is first and latest element."

Then the same voice, which had appeased my fright,  
Occasioned by that sudden-blinding glow, 20

I heard thus freshly to discourse invite.

"Thou hast across a finer sieve to go,  
(There is no help,) but say, who made thee deem  
That thou shouldst bend at such a targe thy bow?"

I said, "By philosophic enthymeme, 25  
And by the truth which from this height descends,  
This love upon me cannot else than stream;  
For whoso good, and as good, apprehends,

He thereof catches love, and larger store,  
As more of goodness with itself it blends. 30

Then toward that Being, which so stands before  
All else, that beyond Him, all good whate'er  
Is from his light a glinting, nothing more,  
Needs must the mind go deeper than elsewhere

In loving, that is mind, which can discern 35  
The truth that doth my argument upbear.

This truth is plainly shown, that I may learn,  
 By him, who doth the First-beloved unfold  
 Of all that liveth as by life eterne.

This the true Author's voice hath plainly told, 40

Who speaking of himself to Moses said,  
 'I shall thee make all goodness behold.'

Thou tell'st it also plainly at the head  
 Of thy great Tidings, which the Truth from hence  
 Adown on earth has loudest heralded." 45

Then heard I, "After man's intelligence  
 And heavenly sanction, which therewith agrees,  
 To God the chiefest of thy love dispense.

But tell me, dost thou feel no cords but these 49  
 To draw thee toward him ? speak, and be it shown  
 By teeth how many does that love thee seize."

Then was the sacred purpose not unknown  
 Of Christ his Eagle, but I was aware  
 To what he my profession would lead on.

I answered him, "All seizures whatsoc'er, 55  
 That can to Godward living hearts incline,  
 In this my charity have a part and share.

For by the existence of the world, and mine,  
The death, which that I might have life, he bore,  
The hopes, that me with all believers join, 60  
Through quickening doctrines, which I said before,  
I from the surge of wandering love have been  
Raised, landed on love leal for evermore.  
I love the plants, that make the garden green  
Of their eternal planter, as among 65  
All such the worth, from Him derived, is seen."  
Scarce had I ceased, and all about me rung  
Sweet choral voices, yea, my heart's ladye  
" Holy, holy, holy," in the number sung.  
As when from open day our slumbers flee, 70  
The visual spirits hastening to fetch-in  
The splendor's gush from coat to coat, whilst he  
That wakes, abhors his faculty to win,  
So inexpert is that first waking stound,  
Ere consciousness her ministry begin, 75  
So Beatris from every film unbound  
My eyeballs at th' effulgence of her smile,  
Beaming a thousand thousand fathoms round ;

So that I saw much better than erewhile,  
 And I began to ask in my amaze 80  
 About a Light, that fourth had joined our file.  
 My lady answered me, " Within those rays  
     Doth the first living soul, that by the first  
 Puissance was fashioned, on her Maker gaze."  
 As when the wind goes by, the bough that erst 85  
     Had lowered its top, recovers on the stroke,  
 And towers up, by its vigor inly nurst,  
 So droopt I through amazement while she spoke,  
     And afterwards grew bolder by a desire  
 To speak, that in me burningly awoke. 90  
 " O fruit, who wast alone produced entire  
     In ripeness," I began, " thou parent old,  
 Of every bride both father and belsire,  
 I pray with all devoutness heart can hold  
     That thou instruct me ; thou discern'st my mind,  
 Which I to sooner hear thee leave untold." 96  
 As when a creature under scarf's we blind,  
     His actuating impulse through that gear  
 Is manifested, which he pulls behind,

The protophyte of souls thus made appear                    100  
 To me across his bright environment,  
 That he to please me came with right glad cheer ;  
 Then breathed, "No need, that thou shouldst represent  
 Thy wish ; for better is by me than thee  
 Discerned, whate'er thou hast most clearly meant. 105  
 For in that soothfast mirror I it see,  
 Which makes of all things copies on its face,  
 And copied can itself by nothing be.  
 Wouldst ask, how long ago did God me place  
 In yon fair garden, where that lady mild                    110  
 To make this flight so distant brought thee grace,  
 And for how long upon my eyes it smiled,  
 And for the great offence what cause was found,  
 And by what language I things named and styled.  
 Not in the tree I tasted was the ground,                    115  
 O Son, which brought on my dread banishment,  
 Nay, but in the overstepping of the bound.  
 There whence thy lady towards thee Virgil sent,  
 Four thousand and three hundred, thirty and two  
 Sun's periods, pining for this home I went.                    120

And thirty and nine hundred times anew  
 I saw that Sun return to every light  
 Along his road, ere I from flesh withdrew.  
 The language that I formed had perished quite,  
 Ere yet upon the labor unmaturable                   125  
 The companies of Nimrod set their might.  
 For since the heavenly movements unassurable  
 Change human tastes, the affection of a heart  
 With reason gifted never was perdurable.  
 To speak is that which Nature doth impart,           130  
 But thus or thus, she leaves it, as the doom  
 Determines, of your liking and your art.  
 Ere my descending to the infernal gloom  
 That Goodness was upon the Earth named El,  
 Of which the joys that overwrap me come,           135  
 And afterwards Eli, and thus 'tis well ;  
 For what are human customs, but as leaves  
 On boughs ; one riseth where another fell.  
 I dwelt upon the mount, that deepest leaves  
 The sea beneath it, in pure life and leal,           140  
 From dawn till that hour, which the Sun receives  
 After the sixth, when shadows eastward steal.

## CANTO XXVII.

"GLORY to Father, Son and Holy Spirit,"

Thus heard I sing, with sweetness that my soul  
Made giddy, all who Paradise inherit.

In that I saw, the Universal Whole

Seemed uttering laughter, for my drunkenness      5  
I felt through eyes and ears alike to roll.

O joy, O inexpressive blissfulness,

O life of Love and Peace without a flaw,  
O wealth nought-lacking, safe from all distress.

These ardors four in front of me I saw      10

Flaming, and he that came before the rest  
Grew brighter, and a tinge began to draw  
Across his aspect, such as might invest  
The sheen of Jupiter, if Mars and he  
Were birds, and each in other's plumage drest.      15

The Providence, that function and degree  
 To all appointeth, in the blest array  
 Had bidden silence in all parts to be.  
 “If I change color,” he began to say,  
 “Admire thou not, for while I speak my case,      20  
 Thou wilt transcolored all the rest survey.  
 He that usurps upon the earth my place,  
 Upon the earth my place, my place, that void  
 Remains before the Son of God his face,  
 Hath made my Vault a sewer, which is cloyed      25  
 By slaughter and by lust; whence He malign,  
 Who fell from here above, deep down hath joyed.”  
 As when the horizon clouds incarnadine,  
 By morn or evening, in the sunbeam sheer,  
 Such tinges I beheld all heaven to line.      30  
 And as a virtuous lady, that with clear  
 Trust in herself remains, and at the theme  
 Of others fall grows troubled in her cheer,  
 So now did Beatris transfigured seem,  
 And such eclipse came haply over heaven      35  
 Th’ passion of the Majesty Supreme.

Continuation to his words was given

In voice, so changed from what it was, that more  
Of change came not across his features even.

" Not fostered was the Bride of Christ of yore      40

By Cletus', Linus', and by my last vein,  
That she might grow a means to lay up store.  
Nay, but the rapture of this life to gain,

Sextus, Calixtus, Pius, Urban were  
Of those, who left life after grief and pain.      45

It was not our intention, that the heir  
Of our great office, part upon his right,

Part on his left, should Christian peoples share ;  
Nor from the keys, to which my trust was plight,

That men a sign for battle flags should frame,      50  
Therewith against baptizèd foes to fight ;

Nor that they for a seal should use my name  
For venal pardons, which are no such thing,

Through which I often blush, and blur my flame.

In shepherds' raiment wolves are ravening      55

Through all the pastures with unhindered course ;  
O arm of God, why art thou slumbering ?

Lo, Gascons and the dwellers of Cahors

To drink our blood prepare ; unto what vile  
Conclusions must thou dribble, O pure source ! 60  
But that high foresight, which for Rome erewhile

Preserved the general Crown by Scipio,  
Shall rescue soon, or me my hopes beguile.  
And thou my Son, who back to earth must go,

As burthened by thy flesh, thy mouth unbar, 65  
And cover nought where I no cover throw."

As when our skies with frozen vapors are  
Thronged in descending flakes, while the Sun's road  
From the celestial goat's horn is not far,  
So now adorned that heavenly ether glowed 70

With triumph-holding meteors upward sped,  
That erst with us beneath had made abode.

My eyes were after their appearance led,  
Nor ceased to follow, till beyond all bound  
Of sight increased the breadth between us shed. 75  
My lady then, who me no longer found

Absorbed in looking upward, "Lower," she said,  
"Thy glance, and see how much thou art come round."

Now from the moment, when I first had spied,

The sun had past already all degrees

80

That with the land's first climate coincide.

Hence the wild cruise of Laertiades

I saw beyond the Straits, and eke the shore  
On which Europa's weight was found to please.

And I had scope yet farther to explore

85

This area small, but that the sun made way  
Advanced before us by a sign or more.

My mind enamored, which doth always play

The wooer towards my lady, more than ever  
Now burned, afresh on hers mine eyes to lay.

90

And if both Art and Nature should endeavor

To bait our minds, which through the eyes are caught,  
With pictures or with human parts, there never  
Could come from all their works assembled aught

To match the bliss divine, that on me shone,  
When mine to meet those radiant eyes I brought.

The power, that such a sight vouchsafed, anon

Disparted me from Leda's lovely nest,  
And urged me into the rapides't heav'n on,

Whose parts most glorious, with most life possest, 100  
Are so alike, that which by Beatris  
Had been selected was not manifest,  
But she, who my desirous doubt of this  
Perceived, began to speak with so glad shine,  
That God seemed in her aspect uttering bliss. 105  
“ The Nature of those motions, which confine  
The centres, and the rest around them bear,  
Commences here as from the starting line.  
And to this Heaven belongs no other Where  
Except God’s mind, in which the Love is lit, 110  
That rolls it, and the virtues it doth share.  
Around it light and love their circle fit,  
As it doth round all others, and that bound  
He only comprehends who stablished it.  
No measure of its march is elsewhere found, 115  
But every motion measured is thereby,  
As five and two the decuple compound.  
And how in suchlike a substratum lie  
The roots of time, and how its boughs diverge  
Elsewhither, thou mayst plainly now descry. 120

O Covetousness, who dost men submerge  
So deep down in thyself, that none hath power  
Above thy miry pool his head to urge!  
Forsooth good will in men puts forth her flower,  
But wildings in the place of grapes are shown, 125  
Thanks to cold Care's unintermitting shower.  
Faith, but and Innocence, are found alone  
With little children; then they scatter fast,  
Before the down across the cheek have grown.  
There is, that lisbeth, and doth learn to fast, 130  
Who afterwards with tongue untied from May  
To April down his throat all meats will cast.  
There is that, lisping, loveth to obey  
His mother, and he'll wish her in the tomb,  
When sentences unbroken he can say. 135  
So the clear skin doth sallowness assume  
In the young aspect of some daughter fair,  
Of him, who brings us dawn and leaves us gloom.  
Thou, lest thou marvel, when I thus declare,  
Consider, over Earth there is no King, 140  
And hence Man's household goes astray, but ere

Your January shall enter into spring  
By the neglected fraction of the year,  
Through these high orbs will Preparation ring,  
Through which the gust looked-out-for shall appear, 145  
That, where the poop hath been, the prow shall  
speed ;  
Then shall the Navy hold its due career,  
And after flowers shall very fruit succeed."

## CANTO XXVIII.

Against the present life of human kind  
Baleful, when Truth had thus been shown to me  
By her, who sets in Paradise my mind,  
As when a man may in the mirror see  
The taper's flame, that is behind him lit, 5  
Ere in his thought or sense the substance be,  
He turns to look, if truth be told of it  
By that reflection, and perceives that each  
To each, as tunes to their own burthens fit ;  
So I remember, that amidst her speech 10  
It fared with me, whilst on those beauteous eyes  
I looked, whence me the noose of love did reach.  
And as I turned me, and as to my spies  
Appeared what is apparent in yon Book  
To whoso doth its orb well scrutinize, 15

A point, that light was radiating, strook  
My sight, so fiery, that each eye it sears  
No more to open to its blaze can brook.  
The star, that smallest in our sight appears  
Close by the moon, would seem a moon, if set      20  
Beside it, like a star beside his peers.  
And near it, as the watery coronet  
Is to the light, from which its color flows,  
When thickest are its forming vapors met,  
I saw a burning ring that point enclose,      25  
Revolving—there is not a sphere more swift,  
That round the world in shortest period goes.  
Around this ring I saw the next ring shift,  
The third round that, the fourth around the third,  
And the fifth round the fourth, and sixth round fifth, so  
And the seventh over that, so far transferred,  
That Juno's handmaid with her circle spun  
Completely, hardly would its compass gird ;  
And so the eighth and ninth ring, and the run  
Of each was tardier, as the number grew      35  
Farther and farther distant from the One.

And in its flame was each of purer hue,  
As near that living spark I saw it roll,  
I judge, because its insight is more true.  
My lady then, for she perceived my soul                  40  
Poised in grave doubt, said, "From that point are  
hung  
The heavens of heaven, and Nature's general whole.  
Observe the circle nearest thereto slung,  
And know thou, that its motion hath such haste,  
From the hot burning love, whereby 'tis stung."        45  
"If," hereupon said I, "the world were placed  
I th' order, which among these orbs I note,  
This answer might have all my doubts embraced.  
But in the world of sense all things by rote  
Are in their nature so much more divine,                  50  
As from the centre they are more remote.  
If I may slake then this desire of mine  
In yon angelicall and marvelled fane,  
Which none, excepting light and love, confine,  
So must I hear, why march not in one train              55  
The Type and what therein is typified,  
For by myself I muse thereon in vain."

“No marvel, if thy fingers to divide  
 Thus fine a knot may inexpert be still ;  
 ’Tis grown so hard by being left untried.”        60

So said my lady, and added, “To fulfill  
 Thy wishes, take that which I now declare,  
 And thereto let thy mind set all her skill.  
 The spheres of matter are some large, some spare,  
 According to the puissance, more or less,        65  
 Which they, diffused in every portion, bear ;  
 For greater Weal to greater bounteousness  
 Is due, and greater space to greater weal,  
 If evenly through every part it press.  
 So to that sphere, that with itself doth wheel        70  
 Round and round all the universe sublime,  
 Answers the ring, that most doth know and feel  
 God’s love, and if thy estimation chime  
 With the quick power, and not circumference,  
 O’ th’ beings thou discernest at this time,        75  
 Thou wilt see wonderful coincidence  
 Of more to greater, less to smaller here,  
 ’Twixt every heaven and its intelligence.”

As when the skiey vault all bright and clear  
Remains, if Boreas from the cheek that most      80  
With breath is freighted, shall have blown out sheer,  
For then is driven away, dissolved, and lost  
The reek, that erst obscured it, so that heaven  
Smiles, in the gloriousness from all his host ;  
So fared I, on such limpid answer given      85  
By my own lady, opening on my view  
The truth, as plainly as any star in heaven.  
And soon as to their close the words she drew,  
Those heavenly circles, like the scintillation  
Of boiling iron, out into sparkles flew.      90  
And every single spark that conflagration  
So copied, that the number would require  
More figures than the Chessboard's duplication.  
I heard Hosannas pealed from quire to quire  
Toward the firm point, in which their place hath  
been,      95  
And is, and shall be, when all terms expire.  
Therewith my lady, who my thoughts had seen  
In doubt far sunken, answered " The first rings  
Have showed thee Seraphîn and Cherubîn.

With such a rapidity follow they their strings, 100

Because their insights to their powers agree ;  
Their powers are such, as fit the chief'st of things.  
Those others, circling in the next degree,

Are callèd Thrones of the Divine Aspèct,  
From their completing the supremest Three. 105

And know, that they are blissful in respect  
Of how far every one sees deep within  
The Truth, in which hath peace all intellect.

Hence blessedness appeareth to begin,  
(Thou wilt distinguish,) in the act of Sight, 110  
Not that of Love, which afterwards comes in.

The measure of their seeing is the Right  
Of merit, which Divine Grace fathereth  
On their good Will ; 'tis thus from height to height.

That second hierarchy, which blossometh 115  
Upon the lap of the perennial May,  
That never nightly Aries plundereth,  
With perpetual Hosannas keeps away

Winter, with melodies threefold, in three  
Orders of gladness, wherein grouped are they. 120

There tripartite, the Goddesses mayst see ;

The first place to the Domination falls,

Then comes the Virtue, last the Potency.

Next, in the two welnigh-last coronalls,

Wheel Prinedoms, and Archangels; and their  
trinity

125

Is filled up by the Angelic madrigalls.

Thus gazing upwards, every consanguinity,

And influencing downwards, from above  
Is drawn, and under draws to the Divinity.

And Dionysius with such hearty love

130

To scan these orders set himself, he quite  
As I do, told the names and rank thereof.

But Gregory his opinion thought not right ;

Hence, when he opened first his eyes amid  
These orbs, he laught at his own oversight.

135

And if a mortal man such truth deep-hid

Propounded, I would have thee not admire,  
For One, that saw it here, the secret did  
Unfold, and many more about each gyre.

## CANTO XXIX.

WHEN both Latona's twins, in Aries  
And Libra gliding, our horizon take  
For a joint girdle, mark the time that flees  
From when the zenith shall their balance make,

On which they rest in equipoise, until  
They, changing hemispheres, that union break.

For such a time had Beatris been still  
With face enbeamèd, and with firm-set ken  
Upon the point, which had dismayed my will.

“I tell, and do not ask of thee,” she then 10

Began to say, “for thy desire I view  
In that, which centres every Where and When.  
Not, that Good might unto Himself accrue,

(Which cannot be,) but that His ‘Brightness’ might  
Say, glancing back, ‘I have subsistence true,’ 15

Beyond all Time, all comprehending site,  
 (Eternity inhabiting,) flowed abroad  
 Into Nine Loves the One Love infinite.  
 Nor erst was like a frozen brook, then thawed,  
 Nor did it *Erst* nor *Afterwards* betide,                  20  
 That o'er these Waters moved the Spirit of God.  
 Matter and Form, both maiden, both allied,  
 From Act, in which no imperfection was,  
 Forth, like three shafts from triple bowstring hied.  
 And as through amber, and through spar, and glass,  
 Betwixt the first arriving of the gleam,                  26  
 And the pervading, doth no moment pass,  
 So this threefold effect of our Supreme  
 Did realize itself, and all through all,  
 Without distinction of beginnings, beam.                  30  
 Rank, Order, were created therewithall ;  
 To those, on whom was Energy imprest  
 Alone, did first place among Beings fall.  
 Pure Passiveness the undermost possest,  
 And Energy, and Passiveness between                  35  
 With tendrils ne'er to be entwined carest.

St. Jerome wrote at large to you, I ween,  
 About Angelic Æons lasting long  
 Ere aught of all the World beside had been.  
 Yet still to point you out this truth a throng      40  
     Of Writers did the Holy Ghost inspire,  
 And thou wilt find it, if thy zeal be strong.  
 And this would Reason too in part require ;  
     For ill she brooks the Movers long should stay  
 In lack of that, which maketh them entire.      45  
 Now these God-loving ones thou know'st, when they  
     Have been created, where and how,—thus are  
 Three burnings from thy bosom put away.  
 And of these angels, ere you could as far  
     As twenty count up, did a certain part      50  
 Bring 'mid your settled elements a jar.  
 Those, who were left behind, took up the art,  
     That thou beholdest, with delight so great,  
 That from their circling never they depart.  
 The cause of falling from their first estate      55  
     Was that Accurst his pride, whom thou hast seen  
 Opprest under the world's concentrated weight.

Those, who were left, could modestly demean  
Themselves, and recognize that bounty, whence  
They for such knowledge were created keen. 60

Their intuitions were uplifted hence  
By light of grace, and their own merit, so  
That Holiness possest in permanence  
Their wills, and I'd not have thee doubt, but know,  
There's merit in receiving grace from how 65  
We open our affection to its flow.  
And so far in this consistory thou  
Hast much to contemplate, if thou but lay  
My words to heart without more comments now.  
But since on Earth among your schools men say, 70

The nature of the angels doth enfold  
Love, Will, and Recollection, I'll display  
The subject farther, that thou mayst behold  
That very truth, which they but half reveal,  
Equivocating in the lore thus told. 75

These Beings, when they once had joy and weal,  
God's face beholding, never turned their view  
Aside from that, whence none may aught conceal.

Their Vision therefore is by objects new

Ne'er interrupted ; hence they have no need 80  
Of recollection from thought broken through.

So there men dream awake, some taking heed,

And others not, how much untruth they tell ;  
Yet have the first more shame and more misdeed.

Ye do not, in philosophizing, dwell 85

On one pervading line of inference,  
And study and love of showing-off impell

To this, but even this doth less offence

Produce on high, than when you underrate  
The Sacred Scriptures, or pervert their sense. 90

'Tis not considered, at how dear a rate

On Earth they have been planted, or how deep  
Men please, that humbly them interrogate.

All for appearances they strive, and heap

Inventions up, and these a stock supply 95  
For preachers, and the Gospel goes to sleep.

One tells you, that the Moon was turned awry

At our Lord's passion, and came in between,  
And cut your sunlight off, and he doth lye.

For of itself the light was hid, I ween, 100  
And therefore, both in Spain and at the Indies,  
As by the Hebrews, that eclipse was seen.  
There's not so many Lappis, nor yet Bindis  
In Florence, as the number of such tales  
In every twelvemonth buzzed on every wind is. 105  
Hence come to fold the sheep, whom judgement fails,  
Filled up with air, for whose excusing then  
The ignorance of their peril nought avails.  
Our Savior formed a true foundation, when  
He chose out his first envoys ; he ne'er said 110  
'Go forth, and preach ye rigmaroles to men.'  
His word, that in their cheeks was trumpeted,  
So pealed, that when to kindle faith they fought,  
It served them, both in sword and buckler's stead.  
But now with crotchets and with quirks far sought 115  
Men go to preach, and if good laughs they raise,  
There shall be fat cheeks cowled ; else mind they nought.  
But in that nest a winged creature stays,  
Whom if the public saw, they might misdoubt  
The pardon, whereto each such credit lays. 120

Thence hath on earth such folly gone about,  
That, seeking not one testimony or sign,  
Their jaws for every promise are held out.  
By such St. Anthony makes fat his swine,  
And others, who than swine far worse are yet, 125  
Who pay, and stamp was never on the coin.  
But since we so far out have rambled, set  
Thine eyes upon the straight high road once more,  
That shorter, like our time, our task may get.  
This Nature doth to such high number soar, 130  
That mortal faculty no words could yield  
To speak it, nor conception to explore.  
And if thou study that which is revealed  
By Daniel, thou wilt in his myriads find  
That strict account of number is concealed. 135  
That Love, whence all their aspects are beshined,  
As oft as there are beings to receive,  
So often is received in different kind,  
Since ever with the actions that conceive  
The affections follow; wherewith his delight, 140  
Fervent or tepid, love must in them leave.

Now contemplate the vastness and the height  
Of yon Eternal Goodness, which can mould  
So many a mirror, whereon breaks his light,  
Remaining one the selfsame as of old.

145

## CANTO XXX.

ABOUT six thousand miles from us the noon  
Is blazing, and the Earth her shadow steep  
Inclines, to reach our Ocean's level soon,  
When over us the midmost heaven deep  
Begins to alter, so that many a star 5  
Fails in this underworld her trace to keep.  
And ere the Sun's most glorious handmaid far  
Forth pushes, all the heaven is disarrayed  
Of gem by gem to those that loveliest are.  
E'en so did the Ovation there, that played 10  
Aye round the point, by which my sight was quelled,  
(Which seemed containing its Container,) fade  
Little by little, e'en till I beheld  
Nought there, and back to look on Beatris  
By this and by my loving was impelled. 15

If all, that hath been told of her till this,

I could in one amount of praise unite,  
For this occasion it would serve amiss.

Nor only doth such beauty pass all height

Of our experience ; none, I think, but He      20  
Who made it, can receive its whole delight.  
Here vanquisht I confess myself to be,

As by his subject in one point was never  
Child of Thalia, nor Melpomenè ;

For as the Sun doth eyebeams, that most quiver,      25

So doth the memory of the sacred smile  
From its own self my recollection sever.

From the first day that I beheld her, while

She dwelt on earth, and up to that last view,  
To keep behind her faileth not my style ;      30  
But now my song her beauties to pursue

With farther poetizing must forbear,  
As artists at the noblest they can do.

Such, as I leave her for some louder blare

Than of my clarion, which out-windeth here      35  
Its arduous theme concluding, she with air

And voice, that might a strenuous Chief's appear,  
Afresh began, "We are come out above  
The greatest body upon the pure-light-sphere,  
Of light intelligential filled with love,                  40  
    Love unto soothfast good with joy replete,  
Joy, that no pain excels the intenseness of.  
'Tis here thou shalt the twofold armies meet  
    Of Paradise, and one now in the faces  
Thou shalt behold about the Judgement-seat."        45  
As when a burst of sudden brightness chases  
    The visual spirits, and our sight deprived  
Remaineth of the plainest objects' traces,  
Thus was I flasht-around with light enlived,  
    That left me by the swathings of its glow        50  
So veiled, that nothing to my sight arrived.  
"The Love, that our heaven quiets, always so,  
    Saluting, to itself receives us each,  
That fit the taper for its light may grow."  
Within me scarcely had this little speech                  55  
    Had time to enter, when I apprehended  
My faculties beyond themselves to reach.

My sight rekindled with new sight was blended,  
Such, that there is not found so bright a ray,  
From which my eyes would not have been defended. 60  
And I saw light in a river's shape, that lay,  
Fulgent with lightnings, between shore and shore  
Tapestried with a marvel-working May.  
And I saw sparkles from its current soar,  
And sink into the flowers all round, which grew 65  
Like to gold settings with a ruby core.  
Then by the odor seeming swilled, anew  
Down in those rapids marvellous they fell,  
And as one entered, forth another flew.  
“Those high desires, that warm thee and impell, . . . 70  
Of knowing that, which yet thou dost but see,  
Please me the more, as more like buds they swell.  
Yet must yon waters first be sipt by thee,  
Before Content such thirst extinguishes ;”  
Thus said the own Sun of mine eyes to me. 75  
“The flowers,” she added, “and the topazes,  
Entering and issuing, and this beaming mead  
Are of their Truth foreshadowing prefaces.

Nor in themselves hard are they to aread,  
 Nay, but the obstacles on thy part rest ; 80  
 Thy meaner vision yet such views exceed."  
 No babe more eager darteth to the breast  
 His face, when it befalls him to awake  
 Far later than his wont, than I address  
 Myself, that better mirrors I might make 85  
 Out of mine eyes, by dipping in the brook,  
 Which flows, that thence of Weal you may partake.  
 And when the sockets of mine eyeballs took  
 Its moisture into them, at once it veered,  
 And round in place of straight began to look. 90  
 Anon like folks, that have in masks appeared,  
 And seem as changelings, when they put away  
 That foreign garb, in which they misappeared,  
 So changed here to a jubilee more gay  
 The sparks and flowers before me, and I saw 95  
 The twofold Courts of Heaven in full array.  
 Splendor of God! O thou, by whom I saw  
 The twofold Courts of Heaven their jubileeing,  
 Vouchsafe me grace to utter what I saw.

There is a Light up yonder, which the Being

100

Of the Creator to that Creature shows,

To whom there is no peace, except Him seeing.

And in its figure circular it flows

Abroad so far, that its circumference

Would for the Sun too large a belt compose.

105

From rays, reflected at their incidence

On the First Mover, cometh all its shine,

That sphere its power and life acquiring hence.

And as the banks, that toward a stream incline,

Make it their mirror, eager to discern

110

What spoils they wear of blades and blossoms fine,

So round above that light at every turn

I saw reflected on some thousand thrones,

All that from us could thereunto return.

If in itself the lowest of these zones

115

Such room includeth, how much must include

That Rose i' th' farthest petals that she owns !

My vision by the expanse or altitude

Was not bewildered, but in-gathered all,

Such-like and so great, that beatitude.

120

No nearness great, or distance maketh small  
 There, for when God sans intervention sways,  
 The laws of Nature out of reckoning fall.  
 To the yellow of that Rose, which ne'er decays,  
 Which blows, and spreads, and offers to yon Sun 125  
 Ever May-making, sweet savors of praise,  
 Beatris led me, mute at first, as one  
 Eager to speak, and then she spoke, "Behold  
 How vast the white-robed Congregation !  
 Look, what a range our City doth enfold! 130  
 Look, how upon the Chairs they sit so nigh,  
 That few there wanteth every space to hold.  
 In the great Chair, on which thou keep'st thine eye,  
 Drawn by that Crown, already placed thereon,  
 Before thou suspest at these nuptials high, 135  
 A soul, that empire must amongst you don,  
 Will sit — great Henry, who shall to coerce  
 Italia march, when she saith 'Come anon.'  
 That covetousness blind, which is your curse,  
 Hath made you equal to the Child, half-dead 140  
 With hunger, and who pushes off his nurse.

And at this time the Sacred Forum's head  
Shall be a man, whose covered and profest  
Plans are not wont in the same path to tread ;  
Whom in the Sacred Functions long to rest      145  
Shall God not suffer then, but thrust him low,  
Where Simon Magus earned by works his nest,  
And deeper down Anagni's Pope must go.

## CANTO XXXI.

In form as a white rose the sanctified  
Host therefore was presented to mine eye,  
Whom Christ had bleeding taken for his Bride.  
But their Associates, whose it is to fly,  
And hymn and laud the Goodness, which their  
powers 5  
Gave, and the Glory they're enamored by,  
As when a swarm of bees amongst the flowers  
Awhile dip, and another while return  
Where the sweet labor swelleth in their bowers,  
Alighted on that ample flower superne 10  
Glorious with many leaves, then sallied nigher  
Where of their love the Lord doth aye sojourn.  
Their faces all were like as living fire,  
Their wings were golden, and the rest so white,  
That never snows in whiteness mounted higher. 15

Descending on the flower from height to height

They flew, depositing of the peace and love,  
Whose fire they had been fanning in their flight.  
Nor did the entering 'twixt the Part above

And Flower—of all that multitude on wing      20  
Impair the sight or gloriousness thereof ;  
For God's voice in the universe doth ring,

Ever as it merit finds, in every place ;  
Check never can it find, nor limiting.

This realm secure and glad, by many a race      25

Ancient and modern crowded, on one part  
Concentred all their love, and every face.

O Light, who, trinal in thy lone star, art  
Their blessing, as before their view thou glow'st,  
Look down to usward our life-storm athwart !      30

If the Barbarians, coming from the coast  
O'er which Calisto circles day by day,  
Her son pursuing whom she loveth most,  
Beholding Rome's great masses in the day

When Laterâno topped the world, might feel      35  
Dismayed with wonder, what was my dismay—

From temporal to immortal commonweal,  
 And from things human to celestial, *and*  
*From Florence to a nation good and leal*  
 To be transplanted, thence you'll understand ;      40  
 Certes, 'twixt joy and wonder I was fain  
 To hear no word, and silent there to stand.  
 And as the pilgrim looks around the fane  
 At ease, to which he journeyed for his vow,  
 And of its make soon hopes to tell again,      45  
 So turning on that living light my brow,  
 I wandered with mine eyes from place to place,  
 Now up, now down, and round and round it now.  
 And I saw many a love-persuading face,  
 Enricht by others' light and smiles their own,      50  
 And haviors deckt with every nobler grace.  
 The general form of Paradise was shown  
 Already by my glances unconfined,  
 Not yet sojourning in one part alone.  
 And with rekindled zeal I turned to find      55  
 My lady, that I might enquire, and she  
 Resolve me that, which poised in doubt my mind.

One thing I sought, another encountered me ;  
I lookt for Beatris, and an ancient man  
I saw — clad like the glorious companie. 60  
His eyes and cheeks a radiance overran  
Of gentle joy, and tender was his air,  
Like as in loving father we may scan.  
And “where is she ?” I spoke out unaware ;  
He answered, “From my place hath Beatris 65  
Incited me to terminate thy care.  
And the third circle if thou seek from this  
First order, wilt behold her, where she stays  
On throne, that equalled with her merits is.”  
Nought did I answer, but my face upraise, 70  
And I beheld her, where herself she crowned,  
Reflecting from her front the eternal rays.  
From regions, wherein thunders highest sound,  
So far removed is never mortal eye,  
That ventures below sea the deepest ground, 75  
As there removed from Beatris was I ;  
But nought it hindered, since her feature sped  
Towards me, thro’ where no mingled mediums lie.

“ O Lady, that of all my hopes art head,  
And hast endured, for my spirit’s aid, 80  
On Hell to leave the traces of thy tread —  
For all the glorious things I have surveyed,  
It is thy power and thy benignity,  
That have the grace and strength to me conveyed.  
From Slavery hast thou drawn me to be free 85  
By every method, and by all endeavor,  
That instrumental to thy aim could be.  
Continue over me thy bounties ever,  
That so my soul, whom thou hast rendered sane,  
To thee well-pleasing from my flesh may sever.” 90  
So prayed I, and she from the far domain,  
Wherein she sat, lookt on me, beaming thither,  
Then toward the Fount of Ages turned again.  
That holy Elder said, “ That altogether  
Thou mayst complete thy pilgrimage, as prayer 95  
And hallowed love for this have sent me hither,  
Glance over with thine eyes this garden rare ;  
For seeing that will keener make thy view,  
That through the rays of God to mount mayst bear.

And eke the Queen of Heaven, for whom all through 100

I burn with love, will grant us every claim ;  
For am not I her Bernard good and true."

As one, that haply from Croatia came

To see our Veronica, and no whit  
Could be contented with its olden fame, 105

Who in his heart saith, when they're showing it,

"O Jesu Christ, O Very Lord God mine,  
Does truly this thy feature counterfeit ?"

So felt I, marveling at the zeal benign  
Of him, who tasted even here below 110

In contemplation of that peace divine.

"O Child of Grace, but never canst thou know,"

Thus he bespoke me, "our estate of weal,  
If thine eye tarries on the last grade low.

But scan the circles even till thou feel 115

The appearance and enthronement of the Queen,  
To whom this empire is devout and leal."

I raised my eyes, and as at morn is seen

The horizon's eastern quarter to excell  
In brightness that, where sinks the sun at e'en, 120

Thus climbing, so to say, to mount from dell,  
I saw one portion of the marge extreme,  
From which that front in brightness elsewhere fell  
Far short, and as where you expect the team,  
That Phaethon guided ill, the light may flame 125  
More warm, and this and that way faintlier gleam,  
So likewise that pacific Auriflame  
Glowed in the midmost, and toward every part  
With like gradation paled away its flame.  
And at this midmost with their wings apart 130  
I saw more than a thousand Angels gay,  
All differing in their brightness and their art.  
I saw upon their songs and on their play  
Smiles beaming from a beauty, that with pleasure  
Lit up the saints' eyes round her every way. 135  
And if I had expressions in like measure  
With my conceptions, still I durst not let  
Them touch the least of her sweet glories' treasure.  
St. Bernard, when he saw mine eyes were set  
Firm and intent on that warm radiation, 140  
Turned his on her so loving, that he yet  
Made mine more eager in their contemplation.

## CANTO XXXII.

ENGAGED with his Delight, that studious man  
Was nothing loth the functions to invest  
Of teacher, and these hallowed words began.  
“The wound, that was by Mary balmed and drest,  
That woman, sitting loveliest at her feet, 5  
Is she, that laid it open and imprest.  
And nearest, in the third row, is the seat  
Of Rachel, and with her to make a pair  
Is Beatris, even as thine eyes they meet.  
Sarai, Rebecca, Judith, next are there, 10  
And the third womb before that Menestrel,  
Who, grieving for his fault, said ‘O God spare.’  
So they from petal down to petal dwell  
In their gradations, as adown the rows  
Descending, one by one their names I tell. 15

And these beneath the seventh degree, as those

Above, are women of the Hebrews all,

Parting the curls and tresses of the rose.

For as the aspect of their faith did fall

To Christward, even so through all the tiers 20

They are divided at this boundary-wall.

On this side, where mature the flower appears

With all her petals blown, are seated they

Who looked for Christ to come in after years.

And yonder side, where intervals inlay 25

The semicircles, do believers own,

Who on Christ, having come, their eyes did lay.

And as from our part by the glorious throne

Of the Celestial Queen, and by the rest

Beneath it, the grand limit is made known, 30

So that of great John makes it manifest

Out there, who, saintly still, the desert bore,

The Death, and then two years amid the unblest.

And under him partitioning, as before,

Are Francis, Austin, Benedict in a line 35

Descending, as thou seest, and many more.

Now meditate the high Providence divine ;  
For the two aspects of the Faith, to fit  
This garden out, shall evenly combine.  
**A**nd from the seats, in midway rank, that knit      40  
These double files, and downwards, thou wilt find  
That none do for their own deserving sit,  
But for another's under terms assigned ;  
For every one of these hath been set free,  
Ere truly self-determined was the mind.      45  
**T**his by the childish features wilt thou see,  
If well thou scan them, and if well thou list,  
Wilt hear it by the childlike symphony.  
**N**ow dost thou doubt, and doubting thou art whist,  
But I'll this hard knot looser for thee make,      50  
Which thy fine-searching cogitations twist.  
**I**n this our liberal kingdom nought can take  
Its place by chance ; for hither no such thing  
Comes—more than thirst, and hunger, and heart-ache ;  
For laws eternal to the stablishing      55  
Of all thou viewest operate, so that right  
Is every finger fitted with its ring.

And therefore these, who took such hasty flight,  
    Into the true life not without a cause  
Are entered so, these more, and those less bright. 60  
That Good, who maketh all this realm to pause  
    In so much love, and in delight so great,  
That nought beyond the daring'st wishes draws,  
The souls in his glad presence doth create  
    And dower with grace, to differ each from each, 65  
And here suffise it, that the fact I state.  
And this to you doth Holy Scripture teach,  
    Full plainly and expressly, by those two  
Twin babes, whom Anger in the womb could reach.  
And after such grace therefore — by the hue,      70  
    I tell thee, of its hair — the high God's sheen  
Entwines their temples in proportions due.  
So not regarding what their works have been,  
    They here in different orders are comprised,  
Differing but as their insight erst was keen.      75  
For in the world's first ages it suffised  
    For their salvation, if with Innocence  
They kept the Truth, their fathers recognized.

But when that early period was gone hence,

The males were bound, their members innocent 80  
By circumcising, to win confidence.

But since the times of healing have been sent,

Without the perfect baptism into Christ,  
Such Innocence down yonder must be pent.

Now look we on the face, that unto Christ

85

Is likest; for there's nought can give thee power,  
Except her splendor, to set thine eyes on Christ."

On Her I saw such plenteousness to shower

Of joyance, carried by each holy Being  
Created to wave wings in that high bower,  
That all, which I had heretofore been seeing,

90

Had never in such marvel me suspended,  
Nor had appeared with God so well agreeing.

Thereat the Love, who first had here descended;

Chanting "O Mary Queen, fulfilled with grace," 95  
His level wings in front of her extended.

The blissful Court from all surrounding place  
To the Canticle divine its answer made,  
Such as to render sunnier every face,

"O Sacred Sire, who deignest for mine aid        100

    Thus low to come down, leaving the sweet rest,  
 In which thy heritage eterne is laid,  
 Who is the Angel, that so blithe and blest  
 Is gazing full in th' eyes upon our Queen,  
 And seems all fire, with so much love possest?"    105  
 Thus from the teaching I came back to glean

    Of him, that beautiful by Mary grew,  
 As the Sun makes the Star of Morning sheen.  
 And he replied, "All cheer and gladness too,  
 That can with Soul or Angel make abode,        110  
 Abides on him, and this we love to view.  
 For he it is, brought down the palm bestowed

    On Mary, at the time God's very Son  
 Was willing to assume our mortal load.  
 But come now, let thine eyes attendant run        115

    Behind my words, and mark the nobles great  
 Of our just, loyal empire every one.  
 Yon twain, that sit in blissfullest estate,  
 Since with Augusta's nearness chiefly graced,

As the two roots unto this rose I rate.        120

See, who beside her on the left is placed :

It is that Father, by whose daring bite  
Mankind so many a bitter thing doth taste.

That Holy Church's Father on the right' 124

Thou seest, who from our Lord the keys received,  
Which He took earthward, of this flower's delight.  
And there is he, that ere he died, perceived

The times of travail of that lovely Bride,  
Who by the Lance and Nails had been achieved,  
By this One sitting, and by the other's side 130

That leader, under whom was fed on manna  
The folk ungrateful, fickle, hard to guide.

Right opposite to Peter sitteth Anna,

Who doth her daughter with such gladness eye,  
That nought she looks away to sing Hosanna. 135

And the grand parent is confronted by

Lucia, by her who called thy Lady down,  
When to perdition thou didst lower thine eye.  
But since the time is lapsing of thy swoon,

Here must we finish, like a seamstress wise 140  
Who, as the stuff permits her, makes the gown.

And set we on the all-first Love our eyes ;  
That, looking towards Him, thou mayst pierce within  
His Glory's blaze, as far as in thee lies.  
Of a truth, and no perhaps, thou drawest-in      145  
Thy wings at this point, fearing thou shouldst grow  
Presumptuous ; but there's grace by prayer to win,  
Yea, grace from her who succors can bestow ;  
Attend me with thy feelings ; and where'er  
My words bid, let thy heart unswerving go."      150  
And therewith he began this holy prayer.

## CANTO XXXIII.

“ *Thou Maid and Mother, Daughter of thy Sonne\**,  
    *Thou humble and high above created thing,*  
Fixt bourne to which counsails eternal ronne,  
Thou art that She, who didst our Nature bring  
    So high, that its Creator did not spurn                 5  
To grow the work of his own fashioning.  
Within thy womb began afresh to burn  
    That Love, whereof the ardency could raise  
This flower, unfolded unto peace eterne.  
Thou here art unto us the noonday blaze                 10  
    Of Charity, and thou to mortal sight  
Art the most living Well of hope that plays.

\* From Chaucer's “Canterbury Tales, Second Nonne's Prologue.”

Thou, Lady, art so great, and hast such might,  
 That whoso would have grace, and asks not thee,  
 His wish adventures on a wingless flight.                   15

Not him alone, who seeks thy clemency,  
 Thou succorest, but oftentimes in sooth  
 outrunnest prayer with liberality.  
 In thee is mercy, and in thee is ruth,  
 In thee magnificence, thou dost enfold                   20

Of every creature's excellence the truth.  
 This mortal now, who from the neathmost hold  
 Aloft hath seen the Universe reveal  
 Her spiritual natures manifold,  
 Beseecheth of thy grace that he may feel               25

The virtue in him, to exalt his eyes  
 Yet farther toward the yondermost of weal.  
 And I, who never burned in equal guise  
 For mine own seeing, as for his dear sake,  
 Add all my prayers, and pray they may suffice ;     30

That so thy prayer may from his vision take  
 All clouds, attaching to the mortal span,  
 Till the Supreme of Bliss apparent make

Himself, and O thou Queen, whose Will is Can,

I farther pray thee, holy to maintain,

35

After that sight, the affections of the Man ;

May thy regard his mortal bents refrain,—

Look with what blest ones Beatris yfere

Spreads hands to thee, his asking to obtain.”

The eyes that God doth love, and doth revere,

40

Fixed on the Speaker, made her well to seem  
As one, that pious orison holdeth dear.

Then back they bent upon the Light Supreme,

In which that e'er another can look higher

With creature's power we never must esteem.

45

And I, who toward the goal, where all aspire,

Perceived myself approaching, as was good,  
Slaked in my heart the fervor of desire.

Bernard was smiling, beckoning that I should

Look upward, but I had begun to do

50

Of mine own self already as he would.

For gathering greater limpidness, my view

Was entering deep and deeper in the ray  
Of that high Light, which in itself is true.

My seeing now was more than words can say,        55  
 For tongue of man must yield to such a sight,  
 And memory under such a brunt give way.  
 As one, who sees a dream, and after light  
 Abides the imprinted passion, but the form  
 Of all beside is lost and faded quite ;        60  
 So is't with me, for nearly all outworn  
 Is now my Vision, but within my heart  
 The sweetness trickles yet, which thence was born ;  
 So the snow's traces, where the sunbeams dart,  
 Evanish, so the Sibyl's prophecy        65  
 Did on the light leaves in the winds depart.  
 O Light Superne, which of thyself so high  
 Above the ranges of our thoughts art hung,  
 Of that thou didst appear again supply  
 My mind some particle, and grant my tongue        70  
 Such force, that of thy glories it may leave  
 One spark, the far posterities among.  
 For if but my remembrance aught retrieve,  
 And aught be voiced and bruited in my lay,  
 Men of thy triumph shall the more conceive.        75

I judge, the intensesse of the living ray  
 Which I beheld, would have bedimmed my sense,  
 If but mine eyebeam had been turned away.  
 And I remember, I was rendered hence  
 The bolder, that my vision I could bear                   80  
 To mingle with the bourneless excellency.  
 O grace supernal, through which I could dare  
 To fix my aspect on the Light eterne  
 So full, that I consumed my vision there.  
 In its profundity 'gan I discern                   85  
 By love bound up together in one whole,  
 All that which through the Universe doth churn,  
 Substaunce, and accident, and all their rôle,  
 Conflated, as it were, in such a mode,  
 That I but saw one very light and sole.                   90  
 The figure universall of this node  
 Methinks I saw, and thus by having said,  
 I feel more joyaunce in me make abode.  
 One stound hath more oblivion on me laid  
 Than ages twenty five on th' enterprise,                   95  
 Whence Neptune marvelled under Argo's shade.

So far my mind, out-lancht across mine eyes,

Was gazing fixed, unmoveable, intent,  
And farther still was fired to scrutinize.

Before this Light we grow of such a bent,

100

That thence to turn for any new aspect,  
'Tis never possible we should consent,  
That good, which is the scope of intellect,

Being all concenter'd here, and what among  
Things else is perfect, being here defect.

105

Henceforth in utterance shall I be strong

For even that which I recall no more  
Than child, who still at nipple batheth tongue ;

Not but that one Appearance only bore

This living Light, the object of my view,  
Which is for ever that it was of yore ;

But as upon my sight more vigor grew

In gazing on a single semblant, hence  
My changing made the constant object new.

In the profound and clearest permanence

115

Of this high light, methought, three orbs did show  
Themselves, of colors three and one expanse.

And one i' th' next, as rainbow by rainbow,

Appeared reflected, and the third a flame,  
That hence and hither evenly should blow.

120

O how short-coming is my speech and tame

To my conception, which to that descried  
Is such, as only poor I cannot name.

O Light Supreme, which dost in Self abide,

And understanding, understood alone  
By self, thy Self dost love and dost arride,

125

That Circle, which appearèd in thee grown

As light from light reflected, having been  
A little traversed by mine eyes, anon

Within itself, amidst its very sheen

130

Seemed colored with the semblance of our kind,  
Which made me thither all my gaze to lean.

As some Geometer, who sets his mind

On measuring the Circle, and no care

Nor thought, the needed principle can find,

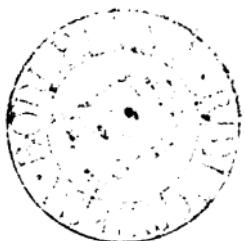
135

So did I at this new disclosure fare;

I sought to learn, how could the image fill  
The Circle, and be coextensive there.

But thereto was my own wing feeble still,  
    Until at length upon my soul did smite                  140  
A lightning flash, and therein came its will :  
Now power forsook my lofty fancy's flight,  
    But my desire and will, like wheels of cars  
That evenly are rolled, was moved by might  
Of love, which sways the sun and all the stars.          145

THE END.



LONDON:  
A. and G. A. SPOTTISWOODE,  
New-street-Square.

## **ADVERTISEMENT.**

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**It is the intention of the Translator to complete the Work by a series of Notes, which will form a fourth volume of about the same size as the preceding, and will appear, D. V., in the summer of next year.**

**Chancery Lane, Feb. 1854.**







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